A

COLLECTION OF TRACTS,

Relating to

The Right of PRIVATE JUDGMENT, the Sufficiency of SCRIPTURE, and the Terms of CHURCH-COMMUNION; upon Christian Principles:

Occasion'd by the late

Trinitarian Controversy.

And now revised and published all together; With a PREFACE: By the Author, *THOMAS MORGAN*, M. D.

LONDON:
Printed for JOHN OSBORN and THO. LONGMAN, at the *Ship* in *Pater-noster-Row*.
M.DCC.XXVI.

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MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

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Lately publiſhed,

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PREFACE.

IF we consider Mankind in their present State and Circumstances, as united in Society, under a necessary natural Relation to, and Dependance on, each other; it will appear, that all the Happiness they are capable of, is, in a manner, Social, and derived from mutual Assistance, and reciprocal good Offices. To this every Man, as a Member of Society, must be indebted for his comfortable Subsistence; for the Enjoyment of his natural Rights and Properties; and for all the necessary Means of his well-Being. Whether there be any Supreme Independent first Cause or not,

upon which all other Beings abſolutely depend; this at leaſt is certain, that the moſt abſolute Princes, and deſpotick Monarchs, depend wholly and intirely upon their Subjects and Vaſſals, even for that very Dominion, which they exerciſe over them; and conſequently, that there is no ſuch Thing as Independency among Men. Men born with the ſame Faculties, indued with the ſame common Affections and Paſſions, and having an equal Claim to the ſame natural Rights and Properties, muſt in Conſequence be naturally Equal; and all the Superiority and Dominion of one Man over another, muſt be owing to mutual Compact and Agreement, unleſs it is founded in Policy or Force: which muſt give every Man an equal Right to the ſame Dominion, who has but Cunning or Power enough to befool and inſlave the reſt. From this natural Equality of Mankind, and their neceſſary mutual Dependance upon each other in Society, it muſt follow, that Benevolence is the ſole Principle and Spring of human Felicity; and that Men can be happy no farther, than this ſocial, benevolent Temper and Diſpoſition prevails among them. And Benevolence producing mutual Aſſiſtance and reciprocal Benefits, being the great univer-

universal Law of Social Nature, the Transgressors of this natural Principle or Law do, ipso Facto, *forfeit all their Right and Claim to Social Happiness, and are accordingly to be considered as common Traitors, and profess'd Enemies to Mankind; and this, antecedent to the Consideration of any positive Law, or to the Will of a supreme Inspector and Judge, from the very Nature and Reason of the Thing it self. This natural Reasonableness and Fitness of Benevolence, as the necessary Means to all social Happiness, makes it the prime fundamental Principle of all natural Virtue, and the Measure of what is Right or Wrong in Society, whether Men acknowledge a supreme Being, or believe in and worship any God or no. And this universal social Law of Benevolence, is strengthened and inforced by certain natural Sensations, Appetites or Passions, deeply impress'd upon the Soul of Man, whereby Men are disposed and determined to the several Acts of Kindness and Beneficence, by a Principle of Sense, antecedent to the Use of Reason. What I here mean is, the natural Sense or Gust of Pleasure attending the several Acts of Benevolence, Compassion, and Good-Will; and the natural Pain, Re-*

gret, Confuſion, and Shame, annex'd to the contrary Acts of Envy, Malice, &c. From whence it comes about, that Men cannot tranſgreſs the Laws of Benevolence and Social Virtue, without feeling an inward Remorſe and Pain, and ſuffering as Criminals, while they contradict the only Principles from which they derive all their Perſonal and Social Happineſs.

But yet it muſt be own'd, that the ſelfiſh Appetites and Paſſions often prevail over the aforeſaid Social Inclinations and Diſpoſitions; and Men are puſh'd on by Ambition, Avarice, and ſuch like, to ſeek a private miſtaken Happineſs of their own, in direct oppoſition to the Law of Benevolence and the common Good. Theſe vicious Selfiſh Appetites and Paſſions induce Men to invade the Rights and Properties of others by Fraud or Violence, and to ſet up for a private Intereſt of their own, ſeparate from, and in oppoſition to, the publick Stock or common Good. Againſt ſuch Invaders, Delinquents and Traitors; Mankind in Society, have found the Contrivance of Civil Government a neceſſary Expedient; whereby the Force of the whole Society is put into one or more Hands, under ſuch Regulations, by com-

mon Consent, as are thought most conducible to the publick Peace and Safety.

These are the two first and principal Means of securing the Peace and Happiness of Mankind in Society; namely, Natural Virtue, or Benevolence practised from the Nature, Reason, and Fitness of the Thing; and Civil Government, whereby the Rights and Properties of Individuals are secured by the Force of Laws, against such as would not otherwise govern and direct themselves freely by the Reason and Fitness of Things.

To this universal Social Law, or natural Virtue grounded on the Reason and Fitness of Things in themselves considered, may be added another grand Principle of vast Consequence to Mankind, and most conducible to Social Happiness; provided it be rightly understood, and fixed upon its true and proper Foundation. What I here mean is, Religion, *i. e. the Belief, Acknowledgment, and Worship of the One only True* God; *or a sincere Obedience to his Will, so far as we can discover it by any of the Ways and Methods in which he has made himself known to us.*

But here it may afford just Matter of Wonder, that when Men are so well

agreed concerning the Nature, Reaſon, and moral Fitneſs of Actions, they ſhould yet differ ſo widely about the Governing Will or Law of God. *Natural Virtue, we find, is the ſame every where; but Religion has more Phaſes than the Moon, and changes its Appearances with the Climate. The True Religion in* Scotland, *is Schiſm in* England; *and our True Religion in* Great-Britain, *is damnable Hereſy all over* France, Spain, *and* Italy. *This has made ſome draw a very wrong Conſequence, That there is nothing at all in Religion; that all Enquiries about it are vain; and that we can know no more of it than of the Philoſopher's Stone: While others, of a contrary Temper, being leſs indolent, and reſolving that no Religion ſhall be True but their own, and that none ſhall be in Favour with* God *but themſelves, compliment the Almighty, by ſending the reſt of the devout World to the Devil, and fight for their own darling Syſtems with carnal, deſtructive Weapons indeed; but not for their own Intereſt, or to gratify their own unreaſonable Paſſions, but for the Glory of* God, *and the Salvation of Souls.*

But notwithſtanding this Strength of Faith on the one hand, and of Infidelity

on the other, I think we have a plain and obvious Principle, whereby to judge of Religion, and of the Grounds upon which Men claim the Favour of GOD, *as his True Worshippers. And this Rule, or Principle of Judgment, is nothing else but the natural immutable Reason of Things, appearing in the Moral Fitness of Actions, as they are constituent of the Publick Good, and give an additional Weight or* Momentum *to the general Stock, or common Fund of Social Happiness. All the Laws of* GOD, *or all the Doctrines and Duties of Religion, must have this Signature and Impression visibly stamp'd upon them, to prove them to be true and genuine: And whatever bears not this Impression, especially if it bears a contrary Character, can be no Part of Religion, no Part of the Governing Will of* GOD, *nor any Means of recommending Men to the Divine Acceptance and Favour. If this Principle, or Rule of Judgment, be not admitted; there can be no clear or certain Criterion, whereby to distinguish the Laws of* GOD *from Human Inventions, or Diabolical Impostures; but Mankind will be left unavoidably exposed to the grossest Absurdities and Delusions in Matters of Religion, and be led into infinite*

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and endleſs Mazes and Perplexities about it, without any Clue or Thread to guide and direct them in it.

'Tis true indeed, there may be ſeveral extraordinary Methods of God's *acting towards Men, which may be highly reaſonable, and bear the viſible Marks and Signatures of Moral Fitneſs, Benevolence, and Social Happineſs, when they are once diſcovered and made known to us; and which yet human Reaſon, without a particular Revelation from* God, *could never have contrived or found out. And this is no more than ſaying, that* God *may find out ſeveral Ways and Methods of improving the Moral Perfections, and promoting the Social Happineſs of Mankind, which they could never have found out for themſelves. But then any ſuch extraordinary Methods of divine Conduct, and the Doctrines founded thereon, muſt, when they are once made known, bear the evident Marks and Signatures of Reaſon, Wiſdom and Moral Fitneſs, and viſibly conduce to the Moral Rectitude, and Social Happineſs of Men; or otherwiſe, we ſhall be left in the ſame Wilds of Enthuſiaſm, and ſtand unguarded and expoſed to every Impoſture, as before.*

Perhaps it may be ſaid, that Miracles,

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the clear irrefutable Teſtimony of Miracles, is a ſufficient Evidence and Criterion of a Revelation from GOD; *whether the Doctrines thus revealed, do all of them, at leaſt, bear the Characters of Reaſon and Moral Fitneſs, or whether they viſibly conduce to the Social Virtue, Peace and Happineſs of Mankind, or not. But I would fain know, what Miracles there are, which may not be wrought by the Power of ſome inviſible evil Spirits, or malicious and wicked Agents, at leaſt, as to Appearance, and ſo as to impoſe on the Spectators, beyond their Capacity of detecting the Cheat; and which muſt then have, to all Intents and Purpoſes, the ſame Effect upon them, as if the Miracles were true and real? If it be urged here, That as* GOD *himſelf cannot confirm any falſe Doctrines by Miracles, ſo it muſt be inconſiſtent with his Wiſdom, Truth, and Goodneſs, to ſuffer others to confirm any ſuch Doctrines by falſe and pretended Miracles, and thereby impoſe upon Mankind in a Matter of ſuch high Conſequence, as their eternal Salvation: It is eaſy to reply, That this is arguing againſt Fact and Experience; for that a very conſiderable, and perhaps the far greater, Part of Mankind always have been, and ſtill are, thus impoſed*

poſed on, by the pretended Miracles of wicked Prieſts, and the lying Wonders of Satan, is evident in Fact: and therefore to maintain, that this cannot be done, or ought not to be ſuffered, is not to prove the Truth of Doctrines by Miracles, but to impeach Providence, and deny the Perfections of GOD. *But the Truth is, that the People in Popiſh Countries, or wherever Miracles are in Vogue, are not to blame for not detecting the Cheats of juggling Prieſts and deſigning Knaves, who impoſe on their Senſes; for this, perhaps, is what they cannot do; the Plot may be too cloſe and deep, and the Deſign too nice and knaviſh for them. But what they are really to blame for is, their receiving Doctrines as True and Divine, upon the bare Atteſtation of Miracles, as a full and ſufficient Proof, without regard to the Nature and intrinſick Character of the Doctrines themſelves. By this means, they are often led into Schemes of Religion, which, in their whole Frame and Contrivance, diſcover the evident Marks and Signatures of Superſtition and Enthuſiaſm, or of Knavery and Impoſture; and which therefore could not be reaſonably received, as coming from* GOD, *even tho' all the Miracles done*

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from the Beginning of the World had been wrought to confirm them.

Perhaps, there are none of the Miracles recorded in the Evangelical History, as done by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, but what, with reſpect to the bare Power of Acting, might have been done by the Devil and Evil Spirits; at leaſt, the ſame Things might have been done, to all Appearance, which muſt have had the ſame Effects. And therefore, when this was objected to our Saviour himſelf, that his Miracles might be performed by the Power of Satan; he does not ſay, in anſwer to it, that the Things done exceeded the Force of Evil Angels, and could only be effected by the immediate Power of GOD: *but ſuch were the viſible Effects of that miraculous Power, and the Nature and Deſign of the Doctrines for the Good of Mankind, that they who made that Objection, muſt ſuppoſe the Devil to be at odds with himſelf; and that he had formed a deep and cunning Deſign, for the Deſtruction of his own Authority and Kingdom. And as this was our Saviour's own Reply to that very Objection, ſo it was doubtleſs the only clear and ſolid Anſwer that could have been given.*

This then, I think, muſt be clear and certain, that no Doctrines can be reaſonably received, as coming from GOD, *or be capable of any Confirmation by Miracles, that are either abſurd, inconſiſtent and contradictory in themſelves, or hurtful and miſchievous in their natural and neceſſary Conſequences; and that whatever Pretences or Appearances of divine Authority may be vouch'd for ſuch Doctrines, either the original Revelation it ſelf muſt have been a Forgery, or elſe the Senſe in which they are thus underſtood, cannot be the true Senſe: For where any Doctrines are received as coming from* GOD, *not characterized by the Reaſon of Things, and the moral Fitneſs of Actions; 'tis plain, there can be no poſſible Guard againſt Enthuſiaſm and Impoſture, nor any Criterion, by which we may diſtinguiſh between Truth and Falſhood, or Right and Wrong, in Matters of Religion.*

I think it cannot be doubted but that a Revelation from GOD, *concerning the Duty and Obedience which he requires of Men, in order to their eternal Salvation, muſt be very plain and clear, free from all Doubtfulneſs or Ambiguity of Expreſſion, and ſuited to the Underſtandings and Capacities of the Bulk of*

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Mankind; ſince to ſuppoſe the contrary, would be to render the Revelation uſeleſs, and to impeach the Veracity, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of GOD *in it. This is ſo very evident, that the Thing is univerſally granted in Words, and almoſt as univerſally denied in Fact; while Men are continually, and endleſly diſputing upon the Chriſtian Principles, even about Fundamentals, or concerning what is or is not neceſſary to a Man's being a Chriſtian, and entitled to the great Goſpel Promiſe of a Reſurrection to eternal Life. Here then, are great Bleſſings and Privileges to be enjoy'd on certain Conditions, but what theſe Conditions are, is the great Debate; and by Mens Diſputes about it, one would imagine, that* GOD, *in the Revelation of his Will, had left this Matter in the utmoſt Darkneſs, Confuſion and Uncertainty. But all this Darkneſs and Contention muſt, doubtleſs, be owing at the bottom, to Mens departing from the plain Rules and Principles of Scripture and common Senſe, for the ſake of their own particular Syſtems and Party Schemes. The Things inſiſted on by Chriſt and the Apoſtles as neceſſary to Salvation, are ſo plain and obvious, that Men could not eaſily be miſtaken a-*

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bout them, if they did not, in Fact, give up the Scripture as their Rule, and tacitly introduce ſome other Principle, or Rule of Judgment, as ſuperior to it. If a Man has a mind to be a good Chriſtian, and to know what he muſt believe and do to obtain Eternal Life, the New Teſtament will inform him plain enough; but if he has a mind to be a Fool and a Madman, let him take ſome one particular Party Syſtem, ſuch as he likes beſt; and having firſt wreſted and tortured the Scriptures into that Senſe, let him then damn all the reſt of the World, that will not be as fooliſh and as mad as himſelf.

But he who profeſſes and acknowledges Chriſt as his Lord and Saviour, and ſubmits to him as appointed to be his Mediator, Advocate, and Judge, by a Commiſſion from GOD *the Father; I ſay, he who thus believes and acts, muſt, as I ſhould imagine, be a True Chriſtian, how much ſoever he may differ from other True Chriſtians about certain Matters of a ſpeculative, doubtful, and diſputable Nature. This was always, and every where, inſiſted on by the Apoſtles and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, as the one great and peculiar Article of the Chriſtian Faith, To believe that*

that Jesus was the Christ, the true Messiah; or the anointed authorized Minister of God, *who had received a Commission from the Father, to promulge, explain, and further inforce the Divine Laws; to intercede and mediate between* God *and Man; and finally, to judge the World, and distribute the Rewards and Punishments of the Last Day. This Faith in Christ, or this Belief concerning him, confirm'd by his Resurrection from the Dead, by the Descent of the Holy Ghost, and by the consequent extraordinary Witness of the Spirit, being, according to the Scriptures, all that ever was preach'd or insisted on by the Apostles to make Men Christians: 'tis to be hoped, that the same may be sufficient still; and that no Man will be shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven, for not believing more concerning Christ, than* God *has revealed, or required us to believe.*

The Belief of One Supreme Independent First Cause, or of One God *and Father of All, was ever the prime Fundamental Principle of Natural Religion: To which the Christian Revelation adds, the Doctrine or Principle of One Priest and Prophet, One Mediator and Advocate, One Lord and Judge of All, even Jesus Christ, as exercising this universal Juris-*

risdiction, by a Commission from GOD *the Father, who is his* GOD *and our* GOD. *The Pagan* Gentiles, *before the Coming of Christ, had not only corrupted Natural Religion, by introducing many* GODS; *but they had likewise many Lords, or Mediators between the* GODS *and them. In Opposition to which, Christianity restores the Natural Principle of One* GOD, *and superadds the Principle of One Only Mediator between* GOD *and Man,* even the Man Christ Jesus, *whom* GOD hath appointed to judge the World, *and whereof he hath given all Men assurance, in raising him from the Dead. This I think is the One and Only Fundamental Article of the Christian Faith, and That alone which distinguishes Christianity from all other Religions. Whoever sincerely believes This, and acts in consequence of such a Faith, must be a True Christian; but he who disbelieves it, must deny or renounce Christ, as a Deceiver or Impostor, in claiming such a Jurisdiction by a Commission from* GOD, *which he had not.*

Men need not therefore be much at a loss about Fundamentals, if they would but lay aside their particular Systems and Party-Schemes, and be determined in this Matter by the Authority of Christ

and the Apoſtles. Something or other is certainly eſſential, peculiar, and fundamental to Chriſtianity; for to pretend that there are very great and valuable Rights and Privileges annex'd to a particular Character or Qualification among Men, which Character cannot be bounded or limited, ſo as to determine Mens Right to the Benefits claim'd, is perfectly trifling: As if certain Legal Rights and Immunities ſhould be annex'd to the Character of Engliſh-men; *while no Body could tell what is, or is not, in the Senſe of the Law, a True* Engliſh-man: *Muſt not ſuch a Law be wiſely contrived for ſecuring the Rights and Claims of* Engliſh-men? *And what is the Chriſtian Law better, if it has not clearly fixed the Bounds between Chriſtians and other Men; or between thoſe who are truly and really Chriſtians, and ſuch as are truly and really no Chriſtians? It muſt, doubtleſs, be Matter of Diverſion to the reſt of the World, to ſee the Chriſtians perpetually diſputing among themſelves, about the eſſential Marks and* Criteria *of Chriſtianity: And the only Conſequence they can draw from it is this, That either Chriſtianity is an* Individuum Vagum, *any thing, or nothing, juſt as Men pleaſe; and that*

Chriſtians have no ſufficient Means of Inſtruction, concerning their own Religion: or, at leaſt, that they neglect the Means of better Information, which are in their Power, while they are continually ſcuffling and brangling about ſomething elſe. The Truth is, that every oppoſite contending Party in the Chriſtian World have claim'd, and endeavour'd to ſecure, the Favour of God, *and the Privileges of the Goſpel, to themſelves alone, excluſive of all others; to effect which, every ſuch oppoſite Party have ſet up, and maintain'd, their own diſtinguiſhing Fundamentals. And thus the Number of Fundamentals, upon the whole, have been equal to all the different Inclinations, Humours, and Intereſts, by which either Enthuſiaſts or Impoſtors have been influenced, in creating Diviſions, Animoſities, and Factions, among Chriſtians.*

But the grand Queſtion debated, upon the firſt Settlement of Chriſtianity, was this; Whether Jeſus Chriſt was a True Prophet, or a Deceiver and Impoſtor? Whether he ſpake and acted by a Commiſſion from God, *or by a Confederacy with the Devil? And this was to determine the Queſtion, whether Men were to practiſe Religion, and obey the Laws*

of GOD, *as explain'd and enforc'd by Chriſt, or by* Moſes, *and the* Pagan *Prieſts and Philoſophers? This was the Controverſy then, between Chriſt and his Followers, and the* Jews *as Followers of* Moſes, *on the one hand, and the Pagan* Gentiles *as Followers of their own Prieſts and Philoſophers, on the other. In conſequence of this, they who were convinced that Jeſus was the Chriſt, or a True Prophet ſent from* GOD, *and acting by a Divine Commiſſion; and who, upon this Conviction, conſented and reſolved to practiſe Religion, or to obey the Laws of* GOD, *as explain'd and enforced by this their only Lord and Maſter; Theſe, I ſay, were received into the Church, and reckoned among the Number of the Faithful. If any Thing but ſuch a Faith as this, join'd with Repentance from dead Works, or Obedience to the Laws of* GOD *delivered by Chriſt, was ever inſiſted on by the Apoſtles, in order to make Men Chriſtians, and intitle them to all the Benefits and Privileges of the Goſpel, it ought to be made appear after another manner than has hitherto been done; while every Party, under the infallible Strength of their own Perſuaſions, are for ſubſtituting their own uncharitable dividing Syſtems, in the*

place of Scripture; and thereby making as many Fundamentals of Chriſtianity, as there are human Creeds and Engines of Diviſion in the Chriſtian World.

There is one Miſtake concerning Chriſt, at leaſt as it appears to me at preſent, which the Chriſtian Writers in general, amidſt all their Controverſies and different Opinions in other Matters, have run into, and unanimouſly agreed in; which is this: That the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of GOD's *Preſence, or the Angel of the Covenant, ſo frequently mentioned in the Old Teſtament, and to whom the moſt peculiar Names and incommunicable Attributes of* GOD *ſeem to be aſcribed, was no other than Chriſt himſelf, in his pre-exiſting Divine Nature. But notwithſtanding this has been taken for granted, or conſider'd as a common Principle by both Sides, in the late Controverſy; yet I think there is great Reaſon to ſuſpect the Truth of it, if not clear and full Proof to the contrary.*

The Author of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, *who was moſt probably* St. Paul, *evinces the peculiar Excellency and Pre-eminence of Chriſtianity, above and beyond any former Diſpenſation, from this Principle; That the Chriſtian Inſtitution is eſtabliſh'd, conducted, and*

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directed, under a Superior Administration, Embassy or Delegation; and that the Person chiefly concern'd in it, is of a vastly higher Character, and greater Dignity, than had ever been employed before in any of GOD'S *Dealings and Transactions with Mankind. And therefore, we find that the Apostle, at the Beginning of this Epistle, having shew'd the great Superiority and Dignity of Christ, both as to his Person and Character, above the Angels, concludes, that the Christian Institution must consequently be more excellent, and of higher Obligation, than the Law; which had been delivered and spoken only by the ordinated Ministry, Interposition, and Mediation of Angels: See* Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3. *compared with* Gal. iii. 19. *and* Acts vii. 53. *The Gospel therefore, is the Law of* GOD *to Man, as delivered by his Son Jesus Christ; whereas the Law of* Moses, *and all the former Transactions of* GOD *with Men, had been delivered and managed by the Subordinate or Inferior Ministry, Interposition, and Mediation of Angels. The Apostle's Argument for the great Excellency and Dignity of Christianity, which runs thro' this whole Epistle to the* Hebrews, *taken in this Light, is very strong, clear, and conclusive: Where-*

as, the Argument would have no Force or Conſequence at all, if it ſhould be ſuppoſed, that the very ſame Perſon, Chriſt himſelf, had appear'd and acted Miniſterially before, as GOD's Angel, Delegate or Repreſentative among Men, at the giving of the Law, and in all the former Ages of the World, from the very Beginning of Things: Since 'tis plain, upon this Suppoſition, it could not be true, that the Chriſtian Conſtitution is more excellent than any other or former Diſpenſation, as being under a Superior Adminiſtration, Ambaſſage or Delegation from GOD to Men. It will be to no purpoſe here to ſay, that the great Excellency and Pre-eminence of Chriſtianity, may be inferred from the great Honour which GOD has done to Mankind under the Goſpel, by ſending his Son in the Fleſh, which he had not done before: For the Apoſtle's Argument does not, in the leaſt, depend upon any different Way of ſending, or different Appearance of the ſame Perſon; but plainly, upon the Superior Character and Dignity of the Perſon himſelf. And when Chriſt is particularly and emphatically diſtinguiſhed from all thoſe Angels, by whoſe Interpoſition, Miniſtry, and Mediation, GOD had appear'd, ſpoken

to, and tranſacted with Men, in all the former Ages of the World; 'tis evident, I think, that Chriſt himſelf cannot be ſuppoſed to have been One of thoſe Angels. Such a Way of Arguing would have been perfectly trifling, and a mere Paralogiſm. But when the Apoſtle affirms, Heb. ii. 5. *That* GOD *had not put the World to come, or this Goſpel-Diſpenſation, whereof he ſpeaks, under Subjection to the Angels; he plainly ſuppoſes, as he had before proved, that* GOD *had ſubjected the former State and Conſtitution of Things, to the viſible Juriſdiction, Interpoſition, and Mediation of Angels. But when Chriſt, in Conſequence of his Death and Sufferings, had been declared the only Prince and Saviour, the only Mediator, Lord and Judge, as acting alone in this Capacity; he then ſpoiled, diſarmed, or diveſted thoſe Principalities and Powers, that is, the Angels, of all that Juriſdiction, Interpoſition, and Mediation, which they exerciſed before; putting an end to their Authority, making them equally Subjects and Fellow-Servants with Mankind, and leaving them no Manner of Dominion or Lordſhip over Men. And here I cannot but obſerve it, by the bye, as a very unlikely Thing, that Chriſt ſhould*

intruſt

intruſt that Spiritual Power and Juriſdiction with a certain Order of Men above the reſt, which he had taken from the Holy Angels; or, that he ſhould deprive thoſe Superior, Glorious Intelligences, of all ſpiritual Juriſdiction over Mankind, in order to place it in the Hands of wicked and ungodly Prieſts.

During that Conſtitution and Diſpenſation of Things, which was managed, conducted, and carried on, under the authorized Adminiſtration, Juriſdiction, and Ordination of Angels; any Angel, who by a Commiſſion from GOD *ſuſtained the Office of viſibly and ſenſibly repreſenting, manifeſting, and circumſtantiating the peculiar Power and Preſence of* GOD, *and of being the Mouth and Voice of* GOD, *or the viſible organiz'd Medium of Communication between* GOD *and Men: I ſay, any ſuch Angel had the Names, Title and Attributes of* GOD *aſcribed to him; not literally, ſtrictly, and properly, as if the Angel had been really and ſubſtantially* GOD *himſelf, or eſſentially endued with all the divine incommunicable Perfections; for this is ſuch a monſtrous Abſurdity, that one would wonder how it ſhould ever enter into Mens Heads: But this Way of Speaking was only figurative, and by a*

Metonymy,

Metonymy, in which the Sign is put for the Thing ſignified; or the ſenſible Repreſentation or Manifeſtation, for the Perſon or Thing repreſented and manifeſted. Which is a Phraſeology, or Way of Speaking, than which nothing is more common in the ſacred Languages. The Pagans, *who worſhipped their* Gods *by the ſenſible Repreſentation of material Images, in which their Deities were ſuppoſed to inhabit and reſide, and where they were thought to be in a peculiar Manner preſent, to receive the Petitions of their Worſhippers; upon this Suppoſition, they gave the Names and proper Characters of their* Gods *to thoſe Images themſelves: but not ſtrictly and properly, as if they worſhipped the bare inanimate carved Matter, or thought that to be the real* God; *but by a common Figure of Speech, in which the viſible Sign or ſenſible Repreſentation was put for the Thing ſignified and repreſented, as before. Thus, when the People of* Iſrael, *in the Abſence of* Moſes, *required and demanded of* Aaron *to make them Gods to go before them, and cried out upon Sight of the Calf,* Theſe are thy Gods, O Iſrael, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt; *'tis evident, that this was a figurative Way of Speaking,*

well

well enough understood at that Time. For the Meaning was, that in this Calf God *and his holy Angels, who had hitherto delivered them, would now continue to reside, after a sensible Manner, by a peculiar and special Manifestation of the Divine Presence and Power; and that upon Worshipping before the Calf,* God *and the Angels would, in a particular Manner, be pleas'd with them, and continue to be propitious toward them. And thus, by a usual and very common Way of Speaking, they put the supposed sensible representative Sign for the Thing signified and represented. But* God, *in this Case, having not allowed or authorized any such sensible Sign or Representation of his peculiar Power and Presence, they were herein guilty of downright Idolatry.*

After the same Manner of Speaking, the Sacramental Bread and Wine are called the Body and Blood of Christ; *and our Saviour often and strongly repeats it,* This is my Body, this my Blood; My Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed; He that eateth not my Flesh, and drinketh not my Blood, hath no Life abiding in him; he shall not see Life, &c. *Which Figurative Way of Speaking upon this Subject, the Protestants;*

teſtants *can underſtand and account for well enough; tho' the* Papiſts *make as much Noiſe about it, and with as unreaſonable a Confidence, as ſome Others have done about this very Way of Speaking in the Caſe before us, ſo often uſed in the Old Teſtament. Innumerable Inſtances might be given, both from the Sacred Writings and common Uſe, of this Metonymical Tranſpoſition, or Commutation of Names and Properties, upon the Ground and Reaſon before-mentioned; but they who cannot be ſatisfied with what has been here ſaid, I am willing to leave in the free and full Poſſeſſion of any other Opinion which they like better: But yet, methinks, when this Way of conceiving and apprehending Things is ſo obvious and eaſy, and ſo agreeable to the Phraſeology of Scripture in other Caſes; it looks a little ſtrange, that Men ſhould venture upon ſo many Abſurdities and Contradictions from a contrary Suppoſition.*

Theſe are, in ſhort, the main Principles and Notions of Things, upon which I ventured abroad the following Tracts; *of which a ſhort and ſummary Account may poſſibly be here expected. It was, I muſt profeſs, with great Reluctancy and Regret, I prevail'd with my ſelf to engage*

gage in Controverſy againſt Proteſtants *in general, and eſpecially* Proteſtant Diſſenters, *about the Right of* Private Judgment, *the Sufficiency of* Scripture, *and the Neceſſity of keeping ſtrictly to the Scripture-Language and Rule, concerning Things fundamental and neceſſary in Religion. I never had ſo much as a Suſpicion, that any of thoſe I have been concern'd with in theſe Papers, had the leaſt Deſign to lay aſide the Scripture as a Rule of Faith, and to ſet up ſome other Rule in Oppoſition to it: But yet I thought, that the introducing of dark and doubtful Speculations, by remote uncertain Inferences and Deductions of Mens own making, and inſiſting on them as neceſſary Terms of Chriſtian Charity, Peace, and Communion, where no ſuch Declaration of Neceſſity could be found in Scripture, muſt amount to the ſame Thing in effect, and have the ſame hurtful Conſequences, with laying aſide the Scripture, and ſetting up another Rule; and therefore, I could by no means reckon my ſelf fairly juſtified or excuſed in ſitting ſtill as a ſilent unconcern'd Spectator, where I conceived ſuch Meaſures to be taking, as muſt naturally be attended with very bad Effects, and introduce, if purſued, a general Confu-*

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sion and Distress among the Protestant Dissenters, *if not a total Dissolution of their Churches, and Destruction of their common Interest. Which last, I fear, must have been the Consequence of the Subscribing Method, had it passed thorough the Countries, and been brought into the several Congregations. This Apprehension, whether I was right in it or not, was doubtless sufficient to set me a-work; and will, I hope, in good Measure, excuse what has been done: even tho' it should be found, that I have sometimes, upon certain Occasions, express'd my self with a little too much Sting and Severity. I must declare, that I can see no Reason to retract any Thing I have advanced in the following Sheets, with regard to the Nature of the Argument, or the Merits of the Cause: But with respect to the Stile and Manner of Expression, where I have treated any Gentlemen of distinguished Worth and Merit, against whom I have been engaged, with too little Ceremony and Respect, I profess my Repentance, and ask their Pardon.*

CON-

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THE

ENTHUSIASM

OF

LETTER

IN A



THE Nature *and* Conſequences OF ENTHUSIASM CONSIDER'D; IN *A* LETTER *to Mr.* TONG, *Mr.* ROBINSON, *Mr.* SMITH, *and Mr.* REYNOLDS.

GENTLEMEN,

WHEN I ſaw *The Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity Stated and Defended*, under your Names, advertiſed in our publick News Papers; the Importportance of the Subject, and an earneſt Deſire of having my Judgment fully ſettled in this Point, made me very impatient to ſee the Book. I thought the leaſt that

could reaſonably be expected from ſuch a Combination of able Pens, was, to ſee the Queſtion clearly ſtated, and fairly argued, the moſt material Objections obviated, and the Whole ſet in a diſtinct and proper Light. But having now conſidered and examined what you have offered upon this Head, with all the Application and Exactneſs I am capable of, I muſt own, that I find my ſelf ſomewhat diſappointed; and that I cannot at all ſatisfy my Underſtanding, concerning the Truth of ſome General Principles you have laid down, or the Concluſions you have drawn from them. I ſhall therefore take the Liberty to offer you ſome of thoſe Reaſons, which, till you can inform me better, muſt incline me to think, that you have laid the great Streſs of Chriſtianity, the Peace of Mens Conſciences, and the Salvation of Souls, upon a mere precarious Foundation, which is not at all ſufficient to ſupport ſuch a Weight; that you cannot your ſelves upon your own Principles, have any rational Confidence towards God; and that thoſe ſerious and plain Chriſtians, to whom you appeal, and for whoſe Sake only you have written this Book, muſt either lay aſide their Reaſon and Underſtandings in the great Articles of their Faith, and content themſelves to believe implicitly as the Church believes, or elſe be left under endleſs and inextricable Doubts and Perplexities about their Spiritual State, and the Salvation of their Souls; ſince you have pinn'd them down under the Penalty of eternal Damnation, or at leaſt as they expect any Covenant-Mercy from God, to the Belief of a Point, which, upon a fair Enquiry, they muſt in all Probability find to be

be extremely doubtful at leaſt, if not utterly repugnant, not only to the Nature and Reaſon of Things, but to the plain repeated Declarations of God in the Chriſtian Revelation.

That I may not omit any Thing that is material in ſo remarkable a Performance, I ſhall begin with your *Title-Page*; and here, by *The Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity Stated and Defended*, I preſume you mean, only your own Judgment, or Opinion, Stated and Defended, concerning the Senſe of Scripture, as it relates to the Doctrine of the Trinity. I have, as I imagine, ſufficient Reaſon to take this for granted, ſince 'tis certain, that as Proteſtants, or even as fallible Creatures, you can mean nothing elſe by it. But whether you mean ſo or no, I think it will be the more neceſſary here to diſtinguiſh between your Opinion, or Senſe of Scripture, and Scripture it ſelf; becauſe otherwiſe, as you have managed the Matter, I fear, that not a few of your too eaſy and believing Readers, might be in great Danger of miſtaking the One for the Other, and of ſubſtituting, without more ado, your Judgment or Senſe of Scripture, in the Place and Stead of Scripture it ſelf.

Indeed, were Men infallible in their Judgments, and known to be ſo, there would be no need of diſtinguiſhing between their Senſe of Scripture, and Scripture it ſelf, becauſe their Senſe in that Caſe, muſt neceſſarily be the true Senſe; but where they are not thus infallible, it is very unfair, and very preſuming, to write as if they were. I would be as tender as poſſible, of charging you with any Thing that you are not plainly guilty of; and the ſetting up for Infallibility in Matters of Faith,

muſt appear with ſo ill a Grace in Proteſtants, and eſpecially in Proteſtant Diſſenters, that I hope you will be able and ready to clear your ſelves from any ſuch Imputation; only, I could wiſh you had not made ſuch a Vindication neceſſary, or that you had not in any Caſe laid your ſelves open to the ill Conſequences of a ſuppoſed Infallibility.

I ſhall not inſiſt upon your poſitive and dogmatical Way of Writing, as if you were as certain of what you were contending for, as you are that the Sun is up at Noon-Day; nor ſhall I urge againſt you, your not once ſuppoſing or allowing that you may poſſibly be miſtaken in this Caſe; and therefore, that it would not be ſafe for ſerious plain Chriſtians abſolutely to depend upon you; but that they ought, with the utmoſt Impartiality, and with equal Fairneſs and Indifferency, to conſider and weigh the Evidence on both Sides, ſeeking Truth only, for its own Sake, without regarding whether the Weight of Humane Authority, or any of the Intereſts or Advantages of this World, be for or againſt it. Certainly ſuch an Acknowledgment, and ſuch Advice, at leaſt once for all, had been but open and ingenuous in Thoſe, who did not pretend to be infallible. But what I would now take Notice of, and make ſome Remarks upon, is, that you ſeem to me directly to claim Infallibility in Matters of Faith, only you have ſoftned it a little by giving it another Name: Your Words are theſe, *p.* 5. "We are far from pretending to an in-
" fallible Judgment about Goſpel Truth or
" Error; but we take it to be an agreed Point
" with Proteſtants, that there may be Certain-
" ty,

" ty, where there is not Infallibility; and " None can deny this, unleſs they will venture " to aſſert, that we can in no Caſe know we " are in the Right, but by being aſſured that " it is impoſſible for us, in any Caſe, to be in " the Wrong." This I think muſt be allow'd to paſs for a very peculiar and remarkable Piece of Reaſoning; for,

1. Here is Infallibility claim'd and diſclaim'd, aſſerted and deny'd: You are far from pretending to an infallible Judgment about Goſpel Truth and Error; and yet you pretend to Knowledge or Certainty in thoſe Matters, which is the higheſt Degree of Evidence that Humane Underſtandings are capable of; and therefore, if you are not infallible ſo far as your Knowledge or Certainty goes, it is impoſſible you ſhould ever be infallible at all.

2. Here is a General Principle laid down, a Point which all Proteſtants are ſuppoſed to be agreed in, that there may be Certainty, where there is not Infallibility; but this being, to my Underſtanding, a plain Contradiction, I ſhall never believe that all Proteſtants are agreed in it, till I have better Authority for it. The whole World is agreed, that there may be Certainty, ſtrict infallible Certainty, in Matters of Science; but they muſt be very weak Proteſtants, if there are any ſuch, who talk of Certainty in Matters of Faith; You cannot be certain of any Thing at all, if you are not infallibly certain of it; and if you pretend to infallible Certainty in Matters of Faith, or Opinion, I hope you will not diſclaim Infallibility in thoſe Matters. But if it is only a fallible or uncertain Certainty that

you claim in this Caſe, you may take it with all my Heart, and I wiſh you much Good of it; be as fallibly infallible, and as uncertainly certain, as you pleaſe: This is a Privilege, which, though it may not perhaps expoſe you to much Envy, yet I cannot engage for it, that it will not expoſe you to ſome Ridicule.

3. And which is ſtranger ſtill, if poſſible, it is ſaid, that None can deny (this Contradiction) that there may be Certainty where there is not Infallibility, unleſs they will aſſert (another Contradiction) that Men cannot be certain or infallible in ſome Caſes, without being ſo in all; or that no Man can be infallible in any Caſe, without being abſolutely and in all Caſes beyond the Poſſibility of Error. By what Force of Magick you have drawn this Conſequence, you have not inform'd us; and perhaps 'tis a Myſtery which you cannot, and therefore in Prudence will not explain; or poſſibly it might not conſiſt with your deſigned Brevity, and ſo you have reſerved it for your next. But be this as it will, I think it is evident that Infallibility muſt go as far as Certainty; and that no Man can be certain of any Thing at all, of which he is not infallibly certain. If you intend to diſclaim Infallibility only in this Senſe, Infallibility in every Thing, or an Impoſſibility of erring in any Caſe at all, the Pope and Church of *Rome* never pretended to ſuch an Infallibility; nay, the Apoſtles themſelves were not infallible in this Senſe; they were not infallible in every thing, or above a Poſſibility of Error in all Caſes whatever: We find St. *Paul* ſometimes giving his Advice only, without pretending to an abſolute Certainty, or infallible Judgment, in the

Caſe;

Case: At other Times, we find the Apostles differing in their Judgments, and debating several Matters among themselves; which could not consist with absolute Certainty, or Infallibility, in those Cases. And indeed, in many Instances the Apostles themselves were plainly left to act upon the common Principles of Humane Prudence, and the Appearances of Probability only, without that absolute Certainty, or Infallibility, which they had in other Cases. They were doubtless infallible in whatever they delivered, as the Mind and Will of God concerning Mens Duty, and the Way and Means of Salvation; And this is all the Infallibility which the *Romanists* pretend to, an Infallibility in declaring what is, or is not, a Matter of Faith, or necessary to Salvation. And I cannot see that you are inclined to yield an Inch to his Holiness in this Point; but that in whatever you think fit to declare as a necessary Article of Faith, or necessary to Salvation, you are as infallible as the Pope himself; you have disclaim'd no Infallibility, but an universal unlimitted Infallibility in every Thing, or an absolute Freedom from Error, or any Liableness to Error in all Cases whatever; an Infallibility, which was never pretended to, which never was nor can possibly be communicated to Men, but is peculiar to God alone.

Thus you have, in great Humility and Condescension, given up the Claim of a divine Attribute, and vouchsafed to divest your selves of the Infallibility of God; but you stand hard by the Infallibility of the Pope; a strict, absolute, or indubitable Certainty in Matters of Faith, is your great and main Principle. This

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Certainty in Matters of Faith, Opinion, or Perſwaſion, this immoveable Confidence, or invincible Adherence to a Thing beyond its juſt Degree of rational objective Evidence, which is the great Foundation and laſt Refuge of all Bigotry and Enthuſiaſm, you hold as faſt as your Integrity, and will not let it go. Now, tho' I cannot conceive how God himſelf ſhould make a Man more infallible in his Judgment in any Caſe, than by imparting to him the certain Knowledge of the Thing; it being, I think, impoſſible that the Humane Underſtanding ſhould be more infallible than Knowledge or Certainty can render it; yet I will not contend much with you about a Name: and therefore, if you do not like the Sound of Infallibility, I ſhall ſubſtitute your own Words inſtead of it, *viz.* Knowledge or Certainty in Matters of Faith: And as I think that theſe are the ſame Thing, ſo I am ſure that all the natural neceſſary Conſequences of either, muſt be exactly the ſame; and tho' in a looſe and popular Way of ſpeaking, Men may confound Knowledge with Belief or Perſwaſion, Certainty with Probability, yet in ſtrict Reaſoning or Argument, we ought always to diſtinguiſh them, both in their Nature and Conſequences, or otherwiſe we muſt unavoidably confound the Nature and Reaſon of Things.

Every Propoſition, or whatever can be objectively propoſed to the Underſtandings of Men, as the Matter of their Aſſent or Diſſent, muſt be Self-evident, Demonſtrative, or Probable only. Where the Relation of Agreement or Diſagreement between any two Ideas is perceived by an immediate Juxta-Poſition of the

Ideas

Ideas themſelves, as that Twice Two is Four, or that the Whole is equal to all its Parts taken together, and the like, the Propoſition is Self-evident, or Intuitive. When the Relation of Agreement or Diſagreement between any two remote Ideas, is diſcovered by a Train of intermediate Ideas, each Antecedent having an immediate ſelf-evident Connexion with its next ſubſequent Idea, ſo as that the firſt and laſt Step in the whole Chain of Reaſoning ſhall be joyn'd together by a Train of intuitive or ſelf-evident Perceptions; in this Caſe the Propoſition will be Demonſtrative, as being founded upon ſtrict Mathematical Evidence: that is, the Propoſition in either of theſe Caſes will be neceſſarily true, and the contrary abſolutely impoſſible in the Nature and Reaſon of Things. This intuitive and demonſtrative Evidence is the ſole Foundation of Knowledge or Certainty; and whatever comes ſhort of this, can amount only to Probability, and can lay a rational Foundation for no more than Opinion, Belief or Perſwaſion; in which, how high ſoever the Degrees of Probability may ariſe, we cannot conclude the Thing to be neceſſarily true, but the contrary will be ſtill poſſible. There will be always this eſſential Difference between Certainty and Probability, Knowledge and Belief, or Opinion, that where there is the one, the Thing muſt be neceſſarily true; whereas the other ſtill leaves the Matter in ſome degree doubtful, and muſt always ſuppoſe the Poſſibility of the contrary. The confounding of theſe Things, ſo different in themſelves, the pretending to Knowledge or Certainty in Matters which are incapable of ſuch Evidence,

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and miſtaking the Strength of Perſwaſion for the Certainty and Evidence of the Thing, is the proper Nature of Enthuſiaſm: For all that Strength of Perſwaſion, which goes beyond the rational objective Evidence of Things to the Underſtanding, is uſually attributed to ſome divine Impulſe, or to the internal Witneſs and Teſtimony of the Spirit to the Heart and Conſcience.

When once a Man is well ſettled in ſuch a Perſwaſion; when once he comes to think that he muſt not ſee, but feel the Truth; or that he muſt not ſee with his Underſtanding, but with ſomething elſe; he is got above the Force of Argument, or rational Conviction: You will in vain endeavour to ſhew him the Inſufficiency of his Principles, or the Weakneſs and Inconſequence of his Reaſonings; for he has God himſelf ſpeaking inwardly to his Soul, ſtriking him with irreſiſtible Conviction, preventing his Faculties, and forcing his Aſſent by a ſuper-rational, overwhelming Light. If you tell him, you are not able to perceive the neceſſary Truth, or ſo much as the Probability of what he pretends to know, and be ſo certain of; that is, he will ſay, becauſe you have not the Spirit of God, or becauſe you lean too much to your own Underſtanding, and judge of Things by your carnal corrupted Reaſon; but, that he has the Spirit witneſſing with his Spirit, that he is actually in the right; his Underſtanding and Reaſon are enlightned, refined and ſpiritualized, and therefore he can ſee plainly the Truth and Neceſſity of what may appear abſolutely falſe, impoſſible, and contradictory to carnal Reaſon. If you urge him

him farther, that you hope you have been ſincere in your Inquiries; that Truth, the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Souls, are Things infinitely dear to you; and that, as far as you know any thing of your own Hearts, you are ready to ſacrifice all that you have in the World to them; that you are ſenſible of the Weakneſs of your Underſtandings, and how liable you are to Error; and therefore with your diligent, laborious and painful Studies, you have always join'd the moſt earneſt Prayers to God, that he would guide and direct you by his Spirit, lead you into all neceſſary Truth, and not leave you under any dangerous Error; and conſequently, that you cannot but hope that, if you ſhould after all be miſtaken, God will mercifully pity your Weakneſs, accept of your ſincere Endeavours to know and do his Will, and not condemn you eternally for an invincible Error: The Enthuſiaſt would reply to you, if not in plain Words, at leaſt by Innuendo's, that all this is mere Pretext and Sham; that you pretend a Love of Truth, the Glory of God, and the like, only to carry on ſome vile, wicked Deſign or other; that he for his Part is certainly in the right, he knows and is ſure of it, as having the Truth witneſſed to his Conſcience by the infallible Teſtimony of the Spirit; and therefore, if you were indeed ſincere, as you pretend, if you had really the Spirit of God, and were not Reprobates, you muſt needs ſee, and think, and feel, as he does. And now I ſuppoſe the Man has pinn'd you down, and you can ſtand no longer againſt him; for there is no Force of Reaſoning can prevail againſt the Weight and Strength of Enthuſiaſm. I

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wiſh, *Gentlemen*, you had not treated this Subject in ſuch a Manner, as to give the World Occaſion to ſuſpect, that you come at the Knowledge and Certainty you pretend to, only in the Enthuſiaſtick Way.

This viſionary Scheme cannot but be attended with two very ill Conſequences, which I never knew it fail of producing in Fact; Implicit Faith, and Uncharitable Zeal. As to the firſt of theſe, it is certain that all that Strength of Perſwaſion which goes beyond the apprehended Evidence of Things, muſt be implicit Faith, and can have no rational Foundation at all; for when a Man is well ſettled in his Enthuſiaſm, and ſufficiently heated with a myſterious Fire, he may work himſelf up to a ſtrong Perſwaſion, not only without, and beyond, but even contrary to, all rational Evidence whatever; of which we have a ſufficient Proof in the far greater Part of the Chriſtian World, who upon this very Account have been wrought into the Belief of the groſſeſt Abſurdity, and moſt complicated Contradiction, that could ever have been thought of, or impoſed upon the Underſtandings of Men: And tho' the pretended Neceſſity of believing what appears to be not only wholly unintelligible, but contradictory alſo, is the ſole Principle upon which the Belief of *Tranſubſtantiation* it ſelf is founded, yet this is ſtill a Principle amongſt Proteſtants; in conſequence whereof, if they are not actually, they are liable at leaſt to be as much impoſed on as Papiſts.

It will be ſufficient to expoſe this Effect of Enthuſiaſm, barely to repreſent it in its own Light; and this will be done only by ſtating the

the Notion, or giving the Definition of Faith. Faith, then, or Belief, as every one knows, is an Aſſent of the Underſtanding to the Truth of a Propoſition, upon the Teſtimony of a Perſon, or Perſons, whoſe Credit and Veracity may reaſonably be depended on. Before we can believe therefore, or yield a rational Aſſent to the Truth of any Propoſition, upon the Teſtimony of Another, our Underſtanding muſt be ſatisfy'd in two things; firſt, that it is indeed teſtify'd by that other, whoſe Authority is vouched for it, and that it is not a meer Impoſition, or Forgery; ſecondly, we muſt underſtand the Senſe or Meaning of the Propoſition, or be able to affix in our Minds ſome ſettled determined Ideas to the ſeveral Terms of it, before one can believe it upon Teſtimony, or employ any Act of the Mind at all about it, unleſs it is barely ſuſpending one's Judgment concerning it: For the Aſſent of the Underſtanding, whether it proceeds upon certain or probable Reaſons, divine or humane Teſtimony, or any thing elſe, being only the joining or ſeparating of Ideas in Affirmative or Negative Propoſitions, as the Things themſelves are ſuppoſed to agree or diſagree; 'tis certain, that we cannot thus join or ſeparate Ideas in Propoſitions of which we have no Ideas at all; that is, we cannot believe or disbelieve what we have no Notion or Conception of. And indeed, Faith or Belief, in the Enthuſiaſtick Account of it, muſt be defin'd to be, an Aſſent of the Underſtanding to what one cannot underſtand, and the joining or ſeparating of Ideas in mere verbal Propoſitions, where we have no Ideas at all.

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This being evidently ſo, it may be worth while to examine the Pleas of Enthuſiaſm, for the Belief of myſterious or unintelligible Propoſitions. It is commonly urged therefore, by the Patrons of an implicit incomprehenſible Faith, 1ſt, That the Scripture itſelf repreſents the great Doctrines of the Chriſtian Revelation, under the Notion of Myſteries. 2d, That tho' we cannot believe any Thing contrary to Reaſon, yet we may and ought to believe many Things which are above Reaſon, or beyond our Comprehenſion. 3d, That there are, in Fact, infinite Things in Nature, which we cannot underſtand, and which we are obliged to believe. A clear Anſwer to theſe Objections, will, I preſume, ſet this Matter in a full Light; and either reconcile the contending Parties, or leave one Side to contend only for Contention ſake.

To the 1ſt, therefore, that the Scripture it ſelf repreſents the great Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion under the Notion of Myſteries, and conſequently that we muſt believe Myſteries, or not believe the Scriptures; I ſay, that a Myſtery, in the Scripture Notion of it, ſignifies ſomething that depends ſo entirely on a Divine Teſtimony, that it could never have been known or diſcovered by humane Reaſon, if God himſelf had not diſcovered or made it known by a particular Revelation in an extraordinary Way; and in this Senſe, the whole Goſpel-Revelation is call'd a *Myſtery*, the *Myſtery of Godlineſs*, becauſe it contains Things which were abſolutely beyond the Search or Inveſtigation of unaſſiſted Natural Reaſon, and could never have been underſtood without

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Revelation; but then, I say, that when once a Thing is revealed, or made known, it ceases to be a Mystery; for it cannot continue to be a Mystery, a Secret, or an unknown Thing, after it is revealed or made known. Thus St. *Paul* says, *Behold, I shew you a Mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trump; for the Trumpet shall sound, and the Dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed,* 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. What the Apostle here discovers, was a Secret, a hidden or unknown Thing before, and must have continued so without a Revelation, and therefore he calls it a *Mystery*; but if it was to have remain'd a Mystery after he had revealed it, he could not have said as he does, *Behold I shew,* or make it known to you: And indeed it must be a strange sort of a Revelation, which leaves the Thing as much a Mystery as before; at this Rate, every Thing might be revealed, and nothing made known. Perhaps it will be urged by Those, who are for the Belief of Mysteries, that what the Apostle here reveals, is revealed but in Part; that the Thing still remains in Part mysterious, for we know not how or after what Manner this Change will be made, or what sort of incorruptible Bodies These will be. To which the Answer is easy, That we are to believe a Thing only so far as it is revealed; and as to the still mysterious or unrevealed Part, as we know nothing of it, so we can believe nothing about it: That the Bodies of Those, who shall be found alive at the Last Day, will be suddenly changed, and that this Change will render them incorruptible, is

what is revealed to our Underſtandings; and this we believe, as what Revelation has made plain and intelligible enough; but after what Manner this Change will be made, or what particular ſort or kind of incorruptible Bodies Theſe will be, as it is not at all revealed, as we have no Ideas of it, and know nothing about it, it cannot poſſibly be the Object of our Faith. So that a Man's Faith muſt ſtill keep Pace with his Underſtanding, and cannot move an Hair's Breadth beyond it; and what goes farther, muſt be a blind implicit Faith, a mere mechanical Impulſe, Enthuſiaſm, or a ſtrong Perſwaſion without any rational Grounds. But,

2d, It is ſaid, that tho' we cannot believe any Thing contrary to Reaſon, yet we may and ought to believe many Things which are above our Reaſon. Now, if by Things above Reaſon, here, be meant Things which can be known only by Revelation, it is very true that we are obliged to believe many Things upon the Score of Revelation, which Reaſon could never have reach'd to without it; but then, I ſay, that thoſe Things which are in this Senſe above Reaſon, as depending wholly upon Revelation, muſt, by the Revelation it ſelf, be brought down to our Underſtandings and Capacities, ſo as to enable us to form ſome clear conſiſtent Notions and Conceptions of them. But if by Things above Reaſon, be meant Things wholly incomprehenſible, or Things of which we can have no diſtinct Notion or Perception at all; I ſay, it will be as abſurd and impoſſible in this Senſe to believe Things above Reaſon, as it is to believe what is contrary to Reaſon; for nothing, I think, can be more unreaſonable,

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or contrary to Reaſon, than to require a Man to believe what he can have no diſtinct Notion, no ſettled determined Idea of. But to ſhew the Weakneſs and Abſurdity of this Diſtinction, thus underſtood, I will ſuppoſe ſome Body or other inclin'd to make the ſame Uſe of his Eye-ſight, that the *Enthuſiaſt* does of his Underſtanding; and in order to this, he diſtinguiſhes between Things contrary to his Eye-ſight, and Things above or beyond his Eye-ſight; and hereupon affirms, that tho' no Man can ſee a Thing that is contrary to Eye-ſight, yet he both may and ought to ſee many Things which are above and beyond his Eye-ſight, or out of Sight. Such an One, I imagine, muſt be allow'd to paſs for a Viſionary with a Witneſs; and I leave Thoſe who are concerned to determine what Difference there is betwixt believing what is above and beyond our Underſtanding, and ſeeing what is above and beyond our Eye-ſight; or betwixt believing without Ideas, and ſeeing without Light or viſible Objects.

3d, It is farther urged, in Favour of this Enthuſiaſtick Scheme, that there are infinite Things in Nature, which we cannot underſtand, which yet we cannot but believe. And here indeed it would be pleaſant enough, if it was not for the ill Conſequences of it, to obſerve how egregiouſly ſome learned Men delight to trifle and blunder upon this Subject! They are ſometimes extremely modeſt, with Regard to their Underſtandings, in Compliment to their Faith; they will frankly own, what indeed they make undeniably evident, that they underſtand but very little of the Na-

ture and Reaſon of Things: But then, whatever they may want in Underſtanding, they abundantly make up in Believing. That there are infinite Things in Nature, which we do not underſtand, and which are wholly beyond our Comprehenſion, and above our Reaſon, I readily acknowledge; but then, I affirm, that not One of thoſe infinite Things unknown can be the Object of our Faith. I have frequently, in Converſation, urged theſe myſterious Believers, who think they have raiſed their Faith above their Underſtandings, to give me any one ſingle Inſtance, expreſs'd in any clear intelligible Propoſition, of a Thing that they believe, and that they do not at the ſame Time underſtand; and tho' one would think this but a reaſonable Requeſt from Thoſe, who talk ſo much of believing above Reaſon, yet I could never prevail upon any One of Them to oblige me thus far; and I am ſo well aſſured of theſe Mens Obſtinacy in this Caſe, that I dare ſay, let who will beſeech them, they will never do it.

I ſhould not, perhaps, have thought any Thing could farther have been urged in Favour of implicit Faith, if you, *Gentlemen*, had not furniſhed us with a very remarkable Diſtinction to this Purpoſe. It is certainly no eaſy Matter to believe what one can't underſtand in any Senſe at all, or form any diſtinct determinate Idea of; but to help us out in this Caſe, You "diſtinguiſh, *p.* 40. between the "Doctrines and Points propoſed in Scripture "to our Belief, and the Things themſelves that "are the Matter and Subject of them. The "Former, you ſay, may be known, and "Ground ſufficient ſeen for the receiving of "them;

" them; where our Reaſon, at leaſt in this its " weak and impaired State, can't reach the " full, clear and adequate underſtanding of " the Latter." You add, " That not attend- " ing unto this, may occaſion Difficulties and " Entanglement in the Thoughts, which o- " therwiſe would be prevented." I would gladly receive any Aſſiſtance which might enable me to avoid Difficulties and Entanglement in my Thoughts; but I muſt frankly own, that I am not able to perceive the Ground of this Diſtinction, or upon what Foundation, in the Nature of Things, you have made it; and therefore, I fear it is a Diſtinction without any Difference: For what, I beſeech you, are the Doctrines and Points propoſed in Scripture to our Belief, as diſtinct or abſtracted from the Things themſelves, that are the Matter and Subject of them? Is it poſſible to believe the Doctrines, without believing the Things contained in them; or can you underſtand the One, in any Degree or Meaſure, farther than you underſtand the Other alſo? What is it to believe the Doctrines, but to aſſent to the Truth of the Things that are the Subject-Matter of thoſe Doctrines? Or what is it to underſtand the One, but to underſtand the Other? 'Tis, I think, evident, that your Ideas muſt be the ſame; and of the ſame Nature, in both Caſes, clear or not clear, adequate or inadequate, alike; and when you can make out the contrary, I ſhall own that you have explain'd a Myſtery, and ſhall expect greater Matters from you for the future: But in the mean while, if we muſt with you diſtinguiſh between the Doctrines and Points propoſed in Scripture, and the Things them-

themſelves that are the Matter and Subject of them, I think there is but one poſſible Way of doing it; and that is, by diſtinguiſhing between the Words of the Doctrines, or the bare verbal Propoſitions, and the Senſe or Meaning of them; and then, indeed, we may be ſure that ſuch Words, or bare verbal Propoſitions, are written in Scripture, without troubling our Heads about the Meaning of them, or whether they ſtand for any Thing, or were intended to convey any Ideas to our Minds, or not; and this, I muſt own, is a ſound Foundation for implicit Faith, which can be built upon nothing but Sounds.

But notwithſtanding your ſhifting off this Buſineſs, under a Pretence of your not having full, clear, and adequate Ideas of the Things themſelves, that are ſuppoſed to be the Subject-Matter of the Doctrines revealed and propoſed to our Belief; I doubt not but to make it appear, that in your Way you can have no Ideas at all of what you call the Things revealed: I ſay, no Ideas at all, either full or not full, clear or not clear, adequate or inadequate; and this, I think, will be made out fully and clearly to every one's Capacity, by conſidering your great and main Propoſition; in which you pretend to have given us the State of the Queſtion; and in which, as I cannot but imagine you have added to the *Myſteriouſneſs* of the *Athenaſian Creed*, you have left your ſelves accountable for ſome peculiar Abſurdities and Contradictions of your own, which cannot be charged even upon *That*. Your main Propoſition, in which you have laid down, as you think, a neceſſary Fundamental Article of Faith,

Faith, and which you ſay you are ready earneſtly to contend for, againſt all Oppoſers, is this, *viz.* "That the Father, Son, and Holy "Ghoſt, (conjunctly taken) and not either of "Theſe alone, (or ſeparately conſidered) are "the One only Living and True God, or the "One Supreme Being, *p.* 19, 20, 21." This Propoſition being what you have ſo ſtrongly expreſſed, and ſo often repeated as a neceſſary Fundamental Article of the Chriſtian Faith, I ſhall take the Liberty to make ſome Remarks upon it. And here, the firſt Thing I would obſerve concerning this Grand Propoſition of yours, is, what you have frankly own'd, *viz.* That you mean nothing by it. I hope therefore, that from henceforth no Body will be ſo injurious to you, as to charge you with underſtanding or defending this Doctrine in a wrong Senſe; ſince I doubt not but effectually to clear you from any ſuch Imputation, by ſhewing, that you do not underſtand or defend it in any Senſe at all. You ſay, *p.* 20. "We farther add, "that though theſe Three are in the Scrip-"tures diſtinguiſhed from, and therefore not "to be confounded with, each other; yet we "have learnt nothing there, either of their be-"ing compounded or divided: Nor do we "therefore undertake to ſhew explicitly, and "in Particulars, how they are Three; nor how, (tho' Three, yet) "they are One." Now, do but ſtand to this Principle, and do not pretend, as you ſay you will not, to determine in particular, how the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are Three, or in what Senſe One; and I dare undertake to ſhew, that *Sabellians, Tritheiſts, Arians, Socinians, Unitarians, Trinitarians, Realiſts,*

liſts, *Modaliſts*, *Nominaliſts*, *Orthodox* and *Hereticks* of all Sorts and Denominations whatever, may all ſafely ſubſcribe your Grand Article of Faith; and without the leaſt Prejudice to their particular and oppoſite Opinions, may all amicably unite in one common Jingle of Words, in one general indeterminate, and therefore inſignificant Propoſition. This is doubtleſs a ſafe and prudent Way of ſecuring *the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints*, by laying down general Propoſitions of an implicit or no Meaning, and leaving every One at Liberty to underſtand them in his own particular explicit Senſe. I hope, therefore, if you ſhould hereafter propoſe this, or any ſuch like Propoſition, as a Teſt of Mens Chriſtianity, that no Body will take you for Impoſers, ſince you only offer them a general implicit Form of Words, which Men are to receive as a Blank, and affix what particular Senſe to they pleaſe. What Pity is it this innocent Deſign had not been more generally known at *Salter's-Hall*; 'tis no Wonder that thoſe who were let into the Secret, made no Scruple of declaring their Aſſent to a Set of Words, which had confeſſedly no Meaning at all, till every one for himſelf had tack'd his own particular Senſe to them; for who would not be Orthodox at ſo cheap a Rate, as making the Words *Three* and *One* ſeem to chime ſo, as to belong, in ſome Senſe or other, to the ſame Thing?

If you cannot or will not determine in what Senſe the true God is One, and in what Senſe Three, then this, for any thing that you can or will determine to the contrary, may be true in either of the particular and oppoſite Senſes, which

which commonly go under the Names of *Tritheiſm* and *Sabellianiſm.* Thus, in the *Tritheiſtick* Way, the Three Perſons, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, may be Three real Perſons, Three Individual Self-conſcious Beings, Three diſtinct Selfs, or intelligent Agents; and God may be One, not by a numerical but ſpecifick Identity, of Three diſtinct real Perſons or intelligent Agents agreeing in one common Nature, or Eſſence, one ſort of Species; and thus the Words *God* and *Godhead* may be taken, not in an individual but collective Senſe, as a Senate, Council, or ſupreme Magiſtracy may be ſaid to be One, tho' it conſiſts of many individual Members, or diſtinct Perſons, of the ſame Rank and Order, and acting in the ſame Capacity by a Joint-Exerciſe of the ſame Powers. Thus you ſee, in the *Tritheiſtick* Way, God, or the Deity, may be One and Three in ſome Senſe, One and Three in different Reſpects; and if you are reſolved to continue thus in the dark, and will not limit the Matter to any particular Senſe different from this, then it muſt be evident to every Body, that this *Tritheiſtick* Scheme may be the true Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, for any thing that you have determin'd to the contrary. Again, in the *Sabellian* Scheme, the One true God, or the One Individual Self-exiſtent firſt Cauſe, whoſe Unity conſiſts in a numerical Identity of Being, or diſtinct particular Exiſtence, may be repreſented and made known to us by Three diſtinct Names, or Characters, on the Account of his having three Relative Capacities, or diſtinct Ways of acting with reſpect to us; as the rational Spirit in Men is ſometimes

times called the *Mind*, when it is conſidered as a thinking, intelligent Being or Agent in general; ſometimes the ſame rational Spirit is call'd the *Will*, when it is conſidered as exerciſing its active Power, Command, or Dominion, in altering or differently determining its own Thoughts and Ideas within its ſelf, or the external Motions of the Body; and ſometimes the ſame individual rational Spirit is called the *Soul*, when it is conſidered as animating and quickening the Body, and conſtituting together with it the compound Being, or rather the Union of two diſtinct Beings, the Soul and Body, which we call the Man. And thus to apply this Inſtance in the *Sabellian* Scheme concerning the Trinity; the One true God, or the One Individual Self-exiſtent firſt Cauſe, who is but One real Perſon, or One diſtinct, intelligent Agent, may yet be repreſented or made known to us under three diſtinct Names or Characters, on the Account of three different Capacities or Ways of acting towards us; that is, this One true God, or One Self-exiſtent firſt Cauſe, conſidered as the common Parent, the Author and Creator of all Things, may be call'd *the Father*; but as he aſſumes the Humane Nature, and acts towards us in the Capacity of Mediator, he may be call'd *the Son*; and thus again the ſame Individual Self-exiſtent firſt Cauſe, as he effectually operates upon the Souls of Men, in Converſion and Regeneration, may be call'd *the Spirit*, or *Holy Ghoſt*; and in this Way the ſelf ſame Natural Perſon, the ſame Numerical, Intelligent Being, or Agent, may be Three, or even Thirty, or Three Hundred Perſons, in a Mo-

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ral or Political Sense, with Regard to his different Capacities or Ways of acting towards others. Now, since you do not pretend to tell us in what Sense the Trinity or Unity are to be here understood, it may be understood either in the *Tritheistick* or *Sabellian* Sense, for any thing you determine to the contrary; for it is evident, that if you cannot tell us in what Sense the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are One, you cannot tell us in what Sense they are not Three; and if you cannot tell us in what Sense they are Three, you can neither tell us in what Sense they are not One; and therefore, according to you, they may be One and Three, either in the *Tritheistick* or *Sabellian* Sense: And then, after all the Noise and Outcry you have made against your Brethren, as if they were apostatized from the Faith once delivered to the Saints; and after all the Zeal you have shewn, and the Pains you have taken to make your selves Orthodox, or rather to secure the Benefit and Reputation of Orthodoxy to your selves, by the fine Amusement of empty, insignificant Sounds; you cannot, or will not pretend to tell us whether you believe in Three Gods, or Three Infinite Self-existent Beings, of one common Nature, Species, or Sort; or whether you believe only One God, or One Infinite Self-existent Being, under Three different Capacities, Relations, or Ways of acting. And thus by the mere Magick of Words, which, by your own Confession, signify nothing, you have advanced your selves to be the Heads of a Party upon the Foundation of implicit Faith. You ought doubtless to be own'd as leading Men among all those who

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can proſtitute their Underſtandings low enough to believe that you mean ſomething, when you can tell us nothing; and who are accordingly ready to yield a ſtupid and blind Obedience to your reverend and venerable Darkneſs.

I hope, as you have taken ſo much unſeaſonable and unneceſſary Pains to clear your ſelves from *Arianiſm*, you will think your ſelves concern'd to ſay ſomething to clear your ſelves from *Tritheiſm*, and to ſatisfy the World that your One true God in Nature, Eſſence, or Species, is not Three true Gods in Number, or Three Individual Self-exiſtent Beings. When you have done this, I promiſe that your Scripture Teſtimonies ſhall be very particularly and carefully conſidered, in order to determine how far the Scripture Account of the Three Perſons, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, can agree to that One Individual Being, who is the Supreme Independent firſt Cauſe of all Things. If you decline an open free Declaration, ſuch as may effectually exclude *Tritheiſm*, I ſhall leave the World to judge with what Juſtice you condemn others for not declaring themſelves; and leave every Body at the ſame time to judge how notable a Teſt of Chriſtianity your famous Propoſition muſt be, *That the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt are the One True God*; ſince, for any thing you have ſaid, or I believe dare ſay to the contrary, your One True God in Nature, may be Three True Gods in Number, or Three Infinite Independent Beings; and One only, as agreeing in one common abſtract Eſſence, or Species, as all Mankind are one, as having one common rational Nature, or agreeing in one abſtract Idea of Humanity.

I think it is very remarkable, with what Artifice you endeavour to evade declaring your ſelves upon this Point, and to keep the Reader in a Miſt of Words, of a general, indeterminate, and therefore of no Meaning. *Page* 8. you ſay, "Now therefore that which upon this Foundation we aſſert, and are ready earneſtly to "contend for, againſt all Oppoſers, is, that "there are Three, who do plainly bear diſtinct Names in Scripture, to wit, the Name "of the Father, of the [Word, or] Son, and "of the [Spirit, or] Holy Ghoſt: We ſay "there are theſe Three, to whom we find the "Scriptures do aſcribe and attribute any thing, "every thing, that is moſt peculiar and appropriated to the Divine Nature, without any "Difference. The moſt peculiar Things, that "do diſtinguiſh God from any, from every "made or deriv'd Being, do not diſtinguiſh "theſe [as to their Eſſence or Being] from each "other." I appeal to the whole World, whether all this general confuſed Talk may not equally be apply'd to the two moſt oppoſite and contradictory Schemes, *Tritheiſm* and *Sabellianiſm*; and whether your Three Names, or Three Things, or Three you know not what, muſt not leave your whole Senſe uncertain and indeterminate. There are Three Somewhats ſpoken of in Scripture, to each of whom, as you imagine, every thing is attributed that is moſt peculiar and appropriate to the Divine Nature; but whether theſe are three Names only, or three Things, three Relations of one and the ſame Being, or three diſtinct Beings, you cannot tell: However, for the more Safety, and that you may agree with Scripture at leaſt in Sound,

Sound, you will call theſe three Somewhats One God, whether you underſtand them as Three Gods, or One God, or whether you underſtand and believe any thing at all concerning them or not. For tho' you neither have nor can prove that Self-exiſtence, Independency, or abſolute Supremacy, is in Scripture attributed to the Son, or to the Holy Ghoſt, and tho' you are not able to prove that every Perfection which is communicable at all in any degree, is not actually communicable from all Eternity in an infinite degree, only with the Limitation of Dependency or derived Exiſtence; I ſay, tho' you neither have nor can prove any thing of this, which if you cannot, muſt be ſufficient to overthrow your whole Scheme, even granting the utmoſt that you can ſeem to prove concerning the Son and Holy Ghoſt; yet I ſhall not inſiſt upon this at preſent, but call upon you again to declare your ſelves off or on, as to the *Tritheiſtick* Scheme, and whether in the Unity of your Divine Nature there are, or are not included Three abſolutely Supreme, Independent, Self-exiſtent Beings? I hope, *Gentlemen*, you will not prevaricate here, but tell us ſincerely and plainly, whether the Object of your Worſhip be that One Supreme Self-exiſtent Being, whoſe numerical Identity and infinite Perfections are demonſtrable from certain Principles of Reaſon, antecedent to any peculiar Revelation; whether, I ſay, this One Individual Supreme Being is the ſole Object of your Worſhip; or whether under the Names of Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, you worſhip Three ſuch Beings. I think we have the more

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Reaſon to call upon you to be ſatisfy'd in this Particular, becauſe you not only aſſert, but lay a vaſt Streſs upon it, that ſome People are ſuſpected to differ from you in the very Object of Divine Worſhip. Now if the one ſupreme Being, of abſolute, infinite Perfection, who is the firſt Cauſe of all Things; if this one ſupreme Being, I ſay, is the Object of your Worſhip, you then direct your Worſhip to the ſame Object with all other Chriſtians, and the ſame Object preciſely with even a *Socinian* or *Deiſt*: But if under the Names of Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, you worſhip Three ſuch infinite, independent, ſupreme Beings; then I muſt own that you differ in the very Object of Worſhip from all Men, whether *Chriſtians*, *Jews*, or *Mahometans*, that believe in, and worſhip but One God. Therefore ſince you have thought it expedient to bring this Controverſy at this Time to a publick Hearing, and have been the Aggreſſors in it, I hope you will be ready to ſatisfy my ſelf and others, as to this very material Point, which I have laid before you, and in which I think Satisfaction is due from you to the Publick, in Point of Honour, and Juſtice; and when you have declared your ſelves, as you certainly may do, directly and explicitly in this Particular, I ſhall then know what I have to do, and you ſhall not fail of hearing from me again in due time.

I have preſs'd this Point of *Tritheiſm* upon you the rather, becauſe ſeveral Gentlemen, who have an high Reputation for *Orthodoxy*, have freely declared to me, (in Truſt of Converſation, not expreſs'd indeed, but I believe ſuppos'd,

ſuppos'd, and who ſhall therefore be nameleſs,) that they thought the *Tritheiſtick* Scheme to be the moſt defenſible upon a Scripture Foundadation. I hope therefore, that you, who have thought it ſo neceſſary to clear your ſelves from a Suſpicion of *Arianiſm*, will not ſuffer your ſelves to lie under a Suſpicion of *Tritheiſm*, or the Belief and Worſhip of Three Gods; which is certainly a Principle demonſtratively falſe, and directly contrary to all Religion, whether Natural or Reveal'd.

I cannot but obſerve one Peculiarity in your Grand Article of Faith, which ſeems to render it in a very extraordinary Manner abſurd; and that is, your ſaying as you do, "That Father, "Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and not either of theſe "alone, are the One only True God;" in which, I think, you plainly contradict, not only your Selves, but all the Creed-Makers that have gone before you, or the goodly Show of Humane Authorities you have produced; for they generally agree that each Perſon diſtinctly, that is, the Father alone, the Son alone, the Holy Ghoſt alone, is true and proper God, tho' they will not have them to be Three Gods, but One God. However, the Creed-Makers ought not to be angry with you, becauſe you contradict your ſelves as much as you do them. You labour to prove that each Perſon diſtinctly, and the Son for Inſtance, has the Nature and all Eſſential Attributes and Perfections of the One only True God: Now if the Nature and Definition of the One True God agrees exactly to each of theſe Three, then it is evident that each of theſe Three muſt be the One True God, the ſame True God that they are when

when conſider'd conjunctly, or elſe there are more One True Gods than One; and indeed if you have declared any thing as the Matter of your Faith, or proved any thing, it is this, That there are Three One True Gods, or One Three True Gods. Perhaps you will ſay, that you have been unavoidably led into this Way of Talking by the Scriptures themſelves; and therefore my ridiculing your Account of the Matter, is in Effect to ridicule the Scripture. But I, who ſhall always think it neceſſary to diſtinguiſh between the Scripture itſelf, and your Opinion or Senſe of Scripture, may, I hope, be allowed to think but meanly of the One, while I maintain a very great Reverence and Veneration for the Other: If you will underſtand the Scripture in a contradictory impoſſible Senſe, or not underſtand it at all, I cannot help that; but then let not, I beſeech you, the Miſtakes of fallible peeviſh Men be fathered upon the Spirit of God. You ought not to conclude that every Thing in Scripture muſt be wholly unintelligible, that cannot be underſtood upon your Principle; or that every Thing muſt be looked upon as an unrevealed unſearchable Myſtery, that will not ſtand right in your Scheme, or that does not lie open and viſible in your Syſtems. I beſeech you therefore, as you have any Regard to, or Concern for, the Peace of the Chriſtian Church, or the Honour of the Chriſtian Name and Profeſſion, that you would not go about, by a raſh intemperate Zeal, to terrify Men from queſtioning the Truth of your Explications, or the Authority of your Creed-Makers. Such a Conduct in Papiſts, or perhaps in High Church-

men, had not been very wonderful, but in Proteſtant Diſſenters it is really ſurprizing; and I cannot but ſtand amaz'd, and bluſh for you, that you are not aſham'd of it your ſelves! For you labour with all the Artifice poſſible, to take Men off from an impartial Enquiry into the Grounds and Reaſons of what they are to believe, and to prejudice them in Favour of Humane Declarations and Deciſions in Matters of Faith; you have imitated and juſtified Thoſe who have gone before you in the Preſumption of affixing the Sanctions of Eternal Life and Death, to the Declarations and Deciſions of weak and fallible Men; and you have, with them, ſubſtituted your own uncertain contradictory Judgment and Opinion, in the Room of the certain infallible Word of God; and therefore, if ever you intend more, upon any future Occaſion, to hold up your Heads among Proteſtants, in Defence of Chriſtian Liberty, and the Right of Private Judgment, you ought publickly to recant, and beg Pardon of God and the World for this ſcandalous Part of your Performance; in which, if I am able to diſcern any thing, you have ſet up an Humane Judicature in Matters of Religion and Conſcience, and advanced the Declarations and Deciſions of Fallible Men, as a Teſt and Standard of Chriſtianity and Divine Faith. If your Harmony of Confeſſions, and what you add upon them, are to be regarded, I do not ſee what farther Uſe we can have either for our Underſtandings or Bibles; for if an implicit Faith in You, and your Creed-Makers, is ſufficient in a Matter which you judge of ſuch Conſequence, it muſt doubtleſs be ſufficient in all other Matters

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of leſs Moment; and ſo we are come (in ſhort) back again to the Place from whence we ſet out, I mean to the Church of *Rome.*

I had ſome Thoughts of enlarging upon this Topick, but am happily eaſed of that Trouble by the Promiſe of an Able and Learned Friend, who will direct a Letter from the Preſs to that Gentleman in particular, who has introduced, exemplify'd, and adorned this Harmony of Humane Creeds, to be believ'd under the Penalty of Damnation; and who has thereby ſerved in ſo remarkable a Way the Proteſtant Reformed Cauſe, by contributing his utmoſt Endeavours to diſcourage and put a Stop to any farther Enquiries, or Reformation in Doctrinals, by ſuch Arts and Methods as muſt have effectually prevented any Reformation at all. I am ſorry that any Proteſtant Diſſenters ſhould expoſe themſelves to the Force of all the Arguments they have ever made uſe of againſt the Papiſts and High-Churchmen; and I cannot but pity the Gentleman who has honoured this Part of the Performance with his Name, if it be true what I have had ſuggeſted to me, that he has been unwarily drawn into this invidious Piece of Service by Another, who, tho' he had Artifice enough to deſire ſuch a Thing to be done, yet he had too little Courage, or too much Prudence, to engage in it himſelf; but however that be, I doubt not but Mr. *Smith* is as capable of defending what he has done, as any Body elſe.

But after all this Ado about the Harmony and Conſent of the Proteſtant Churches, and this artificial popular Appeal to Humane Authority, or to the Judgment of all thoſe who are of

your Mind, it is purely and ſolely your own Judgment, and nothing elſe, that you would have all Chriſtians determined by, in Matters of Faith; it is your own Judgment in Oppoſition to Scripture, or any other different Judgment or Rule whatever, that you ſet up as the Teſt of Chriſtianity, and the great Standard of Truth and Orthodoxy in Matters of Conſcience and eternal Salvation. This is the unavoidable Conſequence of your Scheme, when you declare it neceſſary to Salvation, that all Chriſtians ſhould have a right Faith or Belief, with regard to every Thing that is Fundamental: By which, in your Way, you can mean only thus much, that it is neceſſary to Salvation for all Chriſtians to believe what you think to be right, and to receive and acknowledge every Thing as Fundamental, that is ſo in your Opinion or Judgment. This is your real Scheme, and what your general confus'd Talk, when it comes to ſignify any Thing, muſt neceſſarily terminate in; and to make this out beyond all reaſonable Contradiction, I ſhall here premiſe Two Things.

Firſt, That there is a neceſſary eſſential Difference or Diſtinction to be made between the Scripture itſelf, and your Judgment or Opinion concerning it; for ſince the Scripture itſelf is ſuppoſed to be the certain infallible Word of God, which cannot poſſibly be falſe, and ſince it muſt be alſo granted that your Judgment or Opinion in Matters of Faith is fallible, and therefore uncertain, or ſuch as may poſſibly be wrong; it is evident, that the certain infallible Word of God cannot be the ſame Thing, or the ſame Rule, with the uncertain

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Judgment of weak and fallible Men; and therefore, every one ought to diſtinguiſh here, between the Scripture itſelf, and your Judgment or Senſe of Scripture, who would not deceive and miſlead himſelf, by taking a fallible for an infallible, and an uncertain for a certain Rule.

Secondly, I ſhall ſuppoſe that you have formed your Judgment, in Matters of Faith, upon a ſtrict, ſerious and impartial Examination of the Holy Scriptures themſelves; and that you believe and hold what after ſuch Examination appears to your Underſtandings to be moſt reaſonable and agreeable to Scripture, without any Regard to the Judgment of others, or any Humane Authority whatever. This I ſuppoſe you muſt grant, and then it muſt be farther granted, that while you had the ſame Scripture Rule, the ſame Underſtanding and Faculties, and the ſame Degree of Light or Rational Evidence, you muſt have formed the ſame Judgment, tho' no Body elſe in the World ſhould have been of your Mind; and that till you can ſee ſome farther Ground from Reaſon and Scripture to alter your Opinion, you muſt continue to think as you do, tho' the whole Poſſe of your Creed-Makers ſhould change their Minds and turn againſt you; and therefore, that you are not your ſelves, and conſequently that others ought not to be, at all influenced by them.

Seeing then there is an eſſential Difference betwixt your Judgment and Senſe of Scripture, and the Scripture it ſelf, the one being certain and infallible, and the other fallible and uncertain; and ſeeing alſo what you declare to

be true and neceſſary, is that only which you think to be ſo, whether it be really ſo or not; and which you muſt equally think to be true and neceſſary, whether any Body elſe in the World ſhould agree with you herein or not: From hence, I think it is evident, even to a Demonſtration, that you have changed the Rule of Faith even in Fundamentals; that you have ſubſtituted your own private Senſe in the room of Scripture, and advanced your own weak and fallible Judgment as the Teſt of Chriſtianity, and the Rule and Standard of all Truth and Orthodoxy in Matters of Conſcience and eternal Salvation.

You can have nothing to ſay here, but to inſiſt poſitively in it, that you are in the right, that your Judgment in this Caſe is the ſame with Scripture, and that your Senſe is the true Senſe; but I muſt tell you, that this is ſo only in your Judgment or Opinion, in which you may, as you muſt own after all, be miſtaken: And there are other Men of undoubtedly equal Parts and Abilities, and of equal Honeſty and Integrity in ſearching the Scriptures, who cannot be of your Mind in theſe Matters, and who yet, to any diſintereſted Byſtander, muſt be thought at leaſt as likely to be in the right as your ſelves. Good God! to what an Height of Enthuſiaſm and Bigotry muſt Men be brought, before they can thus ſubſtitute their own private Judgment and Senſe, expreſs'd in their own Words, in the Place of Scripture it ſelf; and then damn all that will not come into their Scheme, or that will not join with them in the ſame Jingle of unintelligible Sounds.

I beſeech you, *Gentlemen*, nay I conjure you, as you are Miniſters of the Goſpel, in the Name of your great Lord and Maſter, and as you expect to be judged by him, let us know by what Authority you have taken upon you to make new Fundamentals, or to declare any Thing as neceſſary to Salvation, which God by any Revelation to Mankind has never made ſo. If you could prove your implicit contradictory Propoſition to be true, which is impoſſible, yet ſtill, while we have the Bible in our Hands, you could not give us the leaſt Appearance or Shadow of a Proof that it is a Fundamental Truth, or neceſſary to Salvation; and what Antichriſtian Tyranny, what an Outrage of uncharitable Zeal then is it in you, to deliver over great Numbers of your Fellow-Chriſtians, who believe in and worſhip the ſame God, through the alone Mediation and Interceſſion of the ſame Lord Redeemer and Only Begotten Son of God, depending upon the effectual Aid and Aſſiſtance of the ſame Bleſſed Spirit of God, in hope of the ſame glorious Immortality, through the ſame Sanctification of the Spirit, and Holineſs of Life; to deliver them over, I ſay, notwithſtanding all this, to the uncovenanted Mercy of God, which is generally but a ſofter Name for the Flames of an eternal Hell; and this merely for not knowing what they could not poſſibly know, or for not believing what they could ſee no Reaſon to believe? If your own eternal Salvation muſt depend upon the Truth of your Scheme, the Lord have Mercy upon you! But though I I have ſufficient Reaſon to conclude that you are under a Miſtake in this Matter, yet I have

more Charity than to think that your Error is damnable. I am perſuaded, that whatever Miſtakes or Errors are conſiſtent with a ſincere Endeavour to know the Will of God, and to do it, are conſiſtent with Holineſs; and therefore with Salvation; and that God not only will not condemn a Man for an Error abſolutely invincible, but will alſo, upon the gracious Terms of his Goſpel-Covenant, by a general Repentance, through the Merits of Chriſt, be ready to pardon all ſuch Miſtakes and Errors as Men may fall into, not from any vicious, ſelfiſh Principle, or any wilful Oppoſition to the Truth, but from mere humane Frailty, or ſuch Weakneſſes and Overſights as are common to the beſt of Men. This is certainly moſt agreeable to the Genius and Spirit of Chriſtianity; a Principle every where recommended and enforced by the Goſpel of Chriſt; and without ſuch a Principle of Charity, and that Diſpoſition and Conduct that muſt flow from it and be influenced by it, I fear the moſt illuminated Dogmatizer of us all would have Reaſon to tremble under the Inſpection of his omniſcient Lord, and deſpair of his own Salvation. For my own Part, I ſee Reaſon every Day, more and more, to thank God for the Bleſſing of ſuch an Education, as never led me into theſe Principles of Bigotry and Enthuſiaſm; but that I can worſhip the One true God, through the Merits and Mediation of his only begotten Son, depending upon the effectual Aid and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, to lead me into all neceſſary Truth, and to guide me through the Snares and Temptations of this World, in the Way of Peace and Holi-

Holineſs, to the heavenly everlaſting Kingdom; without thinking my ſelf obliged to pronounce Damnation on one Side or the other, where Men appear equally honeſt and ſincere, merely becauſe they cannot agree about certain dark and myſterious Points, which ſome weak Zealots may reckon of great Importance. In ſuch Caſes, it ſeldom happens but the confident, preſuming, dogmatical Side are in the wrong; and whether they are right or wrong with regard to their Notions, they are certainly wrong in their Conduct, when they are ſo free with their Anathema's and Curſes, as if God had entruſted them with the Keys of the bottomleſs Pit, and withal given them a Commiſſion to conſign over thoſe to everlaſting Fire, who, in the Judgment of the whole impartial World, muſt be look'd upon to be as intelligent and honeſt, as good Men and as good Chriſtians, as themſelves. For my own Part, I long for that Time, which I hope is not far off, when this Spirit of implicit Faith, and blind uncharitable Zeal, ſhall be exploded and baniſh'd our Proteſtant Country; and when Sincerity on the one Hand, and the abſolute Neceſſity of being actually in the right on the other, ſhall remain as the only diſtinguiſhing Principles of Papiſts and Proteſtants.

I have nothing more to add, but to declare that the Gentlemen in *London*, who ſubſcribed the *Paper of Advices*, have no Hand in this Letter. I am not perſonally known to above five or ſix Miniſters in and about *London*; and of thoſe few I know nothing as to their Sentiments in theſe Matters, farther than they have declared themſelves to the World, that ſome of them

them think the Scripture a ſufficient Rule of Faith, and ſome think otherwiſe. But were all the Miniſters in the Kingdom againſt me, I ſhall continue, as Occaſion offers, to write and publiſh what I ſhall take to be juſt and reaſonable upon this Subject; and ſhall think any temporal Intereſt of my own but a mean Sacrifice, if I can but contribute any thing towards the ſuppreſſing and diſcouraging the Popiſh Spirit of Infallibility and implicit Faith, and promoting that neceſſary Truth which is inſeparably connected with Chriſtian Peace and Unity, upon the Foundation of Chriſtian Charity.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours, &c.



A POSTSCRIPT,

Occaſion'd by

Mr. *Bradbury*'s DISCOURSE,

INTITLED,

The Neceſſity of Contending for Reveal'd Religion.

THE Reverend Mr. *Thomas Bradbury* having lately ſignaliz'd himſelf, among others, in contending for the Neceſſity of humane Teſts, or the Declarations and Deciſions of weak and fallible Men, in Matters of pure Revelation and Divine Faith; as if no Words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth were in themſelves ſufficiently expreſs or clear, till he and his Friends had explain'd and improv'd the Meaning of the Spirit: He has now thought it worth his while, and ſuitable to his Character, to entertain the Publick with a bitter Invective upon the Chriſtian Revelation. I muſt needs ſay, that I have never ſeen more Conceit and Vanity, Uncharitableneſs and Ill-Nature, put together, with ſo ſmall a Proportion of Truth, Juſtice, or Common Senſe, as I find

find in his Diſcourſe, intitled, *The Neceſſity of Contending for Revealed Religion.* He ſets out upon the Strength of his own Infallibility, takeing it for granted that his own abſurd, unintelligible and contradictory Scheme is the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, the real Doctrine of the Goſpel, and the certain infallible Word of God: And upon this bare Suppoſition, without the leaſt Appearance or Shadow of a Proof, he repreſents all who differ from him in any of his Conceits, as betraying the Chriſtian Cauſe, *denying the Lord that bought them*, and eluding the grand Deſign of Salvation in the Goſpel.

He ſeems perfectly diſtracted at the juſt Diſappointment he has met with in the Loſs of his Intereſt and Reputation among his Friends; and to revenge himſelf, having prepared a Compoſition of Rage, Malice and Uncharitableneſs, and lighted it with a blind and burning Zeal, he draws Clouds and Darkneſs all around him; puts himſelf into a wild Confuſion, and ſcatters his Indignation, (the Overflowings of a diſturb'd Imagination) at random. I dare ſay, he can give no other Reaſon for this Conduct, but that thoſe whom he attempts to be ſevere upon, are ſuppoſed not to be exactly of his Mind in ſome diſputable Points relating to the Trinity: However, I can't ſay but it was prudently done, in the Midſt of his Anger, not to meddle with the Argument, ſince 'tis evident his Talent does not lie that Way.

I think Mr. *Bradbury* has committed a remarkable Blunder in his Title-Page; which, to render it conſiſtent with his Book, ſhould have been, *The Neceſſity of Contending for Unreveal'd*

revealed Religion; or, *The Neceſſity of a blind implicit Belief of we know not what*: ſince I fear that he has not contended for any one Principle of Revealed Religion as he ought; nay, that he has ſapp'd the Foundation of all Religion, whether Natural or Reveal'd; expoſed the Chriſtian Revelation to the Scorn and Contempt of the whole intelligent World; and left himſelf no Principle, no Footing, upon which he can poſſibly defend it.

I preſume my Reader will not think it improper that I ſhould tack the following *Remarks* as a *Poſtſcript* to this Letter, when they ſhall find how much to the Life Mr. *Bradbury* has exemplify'd my Character of an *Enthuſiaſt*. Tho' he has not told us what his own Thoughts are of the main Subjects he writes about, yet he ſtill ſuppoſes that he is actually in the right; that his own Judgment, or *rather his confuſed inexplicable Conceits*, are the certain infallible Word of God, and the Faith once delivered to the Saints. And tho' this is what he has no more Right to ſuppoſe in his own Favour, than a *Papiſt*, or any other Enthuſiaſt whatever; yet take away this Suppoſition, and I defy him, or any Man living, to render any one ſingle Page of his Book conſiſtent or intelligible. But tho' he continually aſſumes, with the utmoſt Confidence, the Privilege of being in the right, yet he has not once dared to attempt the Argument; 'tis here only his Courage fails him; and here indeed he has diſcovered a little Modeſty. But not to detain the Reader in Generals, I ſhall proceed to make a few particular Remarks upon the Diſcourſe now under Conſideration.

1. One

1. One Thing, which I cannot but obſerve in Mr. *Bradbury*, is his general and confuſed Way of applying Texts of Scripture, to Purpoſes for which they were never intended, and to which they have not the leaſt Relation. He cannot rail or talk Nonſenſe, but in the Name of the Lord: He loads every Page with Scripture-Texts; which, for the moſt Part, *as apply'd by him*, ſignify juſt as much as if they were brought to ſupport the Papal Tranſubſtantiation of the Elements, or the *Pythagorean* Tranſmigration of Souls. All his Darkneſs and Jargon, is *ſanctify'd Reaſon*; when he has made himſelf really ridiculous, if he happens to be laugh'd at, tho' by Men of the beſt Senſe and ſtricteſt Morals, he is preſently made *the Song of the Drunkard*; and thoſe, who cannot give into his Scheme, are Men of a *reprobate Senſe and a carnal Mind*. To doubt of his Interpretations, is to depart from *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*; and to contradict his Opinions, is doing *deſpite to the Spirit of Grace*. If *he* maintains the groſſeſt and moſt palpable Abſurdities and Contradictions, it is becauſe his *Underſtanding is enlightened*, and becauſe he *walks by Faith, and not by Sight*; and if he ſubverts all the Principles of Reaſon and Religion, he has ſufficient Grounds and Scripture-Authority for it, as being *ſet for the Defence of the Goſpel*. I ſhall here give ſome Inſtances of this Depth of Enthuſiaſm in his applying Scripture, that every one may ſee I do not ſpeak thus of him without ſufficient Reaſon.

I had placed the *Nature of Enthuſiaſm* in a ſtrong Perſuaſion, grounded upon the Conceit of ſome inward, ſecret, divine Impulſe or Teſtimony

ſtimony of the Spirit to the Heart and Conſcience, without any rational objective Evidence, or clear and ſufficient Proofs: And I had ſhewn, that this Enthuſiaſtick Principle expoſes Men to all the Miſchiefs of a blind implicit Faith, and an Antichriſtian uncharitable Zeal; ſince every warm conceited Zealot, how wild or extravagant ſoever his Opinions are, may make ſuch a Plea with equal Juſtice. I took it for granted that the Evidence upon which the Truth of the Chriſtian Doctrines is founded, is a Rational Evidence; and that it is objectively propoſed to the Underſtandings of Men by clear and ſufficient Proofs. Now, Mr. *Bradbury*, tho' he has done me the Honour to obſerve upon me *in his own Way*, yet he does not pretend to ſhew that I have either miſtaken the Notion of Enthuſiaſm, or miſapply'd it; but with wonderful Patience takes all the Abſurdities I had charged upon the Score of Enthuſiaſm to himſelf, and endeavours to juſtify the Character by tacking certain Scripture Sounds to the ſeveral Parts of it.

Thus when I make it a Mark of an Enthuſiaſt, to pretend to the Teſtimony of the Spirit for the Belief of what he cannot make out by any rational objective Evidence; Mr. *Bradbury* claps in this Text, 1 *Cor.* ii. 9, 10. *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have enter'd into the Heart of Man, the Things which God has prepar'd for them that love him; but God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit.* I would here aſk him, whether the Things which God has revealed unto us by his Spirit, are revealed in their proper rational objective Evidence to our Underſtandings, ſo as to render them intelligible and conſiſtent

conſiſtent with the Nature and Reaſon of Things? If they are, he has not quoted this Text againſt any Thing that I have ſaid; but if they are not thus revealed intelligibly in their objective Evidence to the Underſtanding and Reaſon, I defy him to ſhew that they are revealed in any Manner or Senſe at all. He goes on in the ſame Way to chime in the Sounds of other Texts; as, *We walk by Faith, and not by Sight. Ye have an Unction from the Holy One*, &c. *The Carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God. The Spirit witneſſes with our Spirit. The Eyes of our Underſtanding are enlighten'd*, &c. *p.* 13. and then concludes with this notable Obſervation: "By theſe Scriptures it appears, that all the "Phraſes which this daring Author is ſo merry "with, are no other than what the Holy "Ghoſt teacheth: A poor Sign of ſuch Per-"ſons Value for the Bible, when the Word of "the Lord is to them a Reproach!" But when, I pray, or by what Means, did the Word of the Lord come to Mr. *Bradbury* with the Revelation of this New Doctrine, that there is no Difference between Scripture-Truths and Scripture-Phraſes; or that Men may not uſe the Phraſes which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth in a very abſurd and ridiculous Manner, without underſtanding, or without regarding the Meaning of the Spirit? Let him ſhew that I have miſtaken the Nature of Enthuſiaſm, or charged it were it is not due, and I will ſubmit to his ſevereſt Cenſures, and publickly beg his Pardon; but otherwiſe, I muſt tell him that he has done more to fix the Ridicule upon himſelf, than any Body could poſſibly have done without him.

Mr.

Mr. *Bradbury*, in his Way of quoting Scripture, makes no Scruple of applying the Authoritative Declarations of the Apoſtles, concerning the Doctrines which they had received by Revelation from God, and the Sufferings they were expoſed to in Defence of the Truth: I ſay, he makes no Scruple of applying all this to himſelf, as his own Perſonal Caſe, in theſe preſent Diſputes among his Brethren; as if he was as certainly and infallibly in the right, and was as certainly and infallibly a Sufferer for the Truth, as the Apoſtles themſelves were. But, with what Face can this ſanguine Gentleman ever make his Appearance again in any publick Aſſembly, after he has done himſelf ſuch ſignal and undeſerved Honours! This Arrogance of placing himſelf in the Chair, and dictating to the People with an Aire of Apoſtolical Certainty and Authority, runs thro' his whole Diſcourſe; and one cannot read a ſingle Page, without being ſhock'd and ſurpriz'd at it. But I ſhall have Occaſion to exemplify this more particularly under the next Remark; which is,

2. That he brings his railing Accuſations againſt his innocent Brethren, *of denying the Lord that bought them, and departing from the Faith once delivered to the Saints*; not only in Defiance of all that Charity which the Goſpel requires, but without the leaſt Regard to the eternal Moral Obligations of Truth and Juſtice.

He has given me a Taſte of this Spirit, among the numerous Calumnies and Reproaches which he has poured out againſt the whole Body of the Non-ſubſcribers. The Four Gentlemen, to whom I wrote the foregoing Letter,

having declared it as a neceſſary Fundamental Article of the Chriſtian Faith, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, (conjunctly taken) and not either of theſe alone, (or ſeparately conſider'd) are the One only True God, or the One Supreme Being; I call'd upon them to affix ſome diſtinct determinate Ideas to the ſeveral Terms they make uſe of in this Propoſition, or to tell us what they mean by *One God*, or by the Words *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, as they uſe them ſometimes ſeparately, and ſometimes conjunctly, and ſuppoſe them not to ſignify preciſely the ſame Thing: This I thought they could not do in their Scheme, without giving up either the Unity of God, or the Trinity of Perſons; and ſo falling into *Socinianiſm* on the one Hand, or *Tritheiſm* on the other. It does not yet appear that the Gentlemen themſelves have any Thing to ſay to this; for they have not thought fit to ſatisfy the World, that they have uſed articulate Sounds in this Caſe with any Senſe or Meaning at all. Mr. *Bradbury*, I believe, would willingly have help'd 'em to an Anſwer to this Part of my Letter; but he finds it much eaſier to furniſh his Quota of Defamation. He affirms in his *Preface*, p. 12. referring to the foregoing Letter, *p.* 34. "That the "very Thing I there write againſt is, their "ſubſcribing that there is but One only Li-"ving and True God." I cannot but ſtand amaz'd, to think with what Senſe or Shame, with what Honour or Conſcience, he could ſay this in the Face of the whole World about us, which every Body knows to be falſe: He might with equal Truth and Juſtice have declared, tha

that the only Thing I wrote againſt was, their having proteſted againſt the Opinions of *Machiavel*, *Hobbes*, or *Spinoza*; but there is no guarding againſt a Man, who always writes Controverſy in a Ferment.

In attempting to render his Non-ſubſcribing Brethren, or all thoſe he does not like, odious; he has made himſelf perfectly ridiculous, by the greateſt poſſible Abuſe and Miſapplication of Scripture: He confounds the external rational Evidence, upon which the Truth of the Chriſtian Doctrine is grounded, in the plain Declarations of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, confirmed by the Holy Ghoſt in the Power of Miracles, with the internal Sanctification of the Spirit ſubduing the Luſts of Men, and reconciling them to the Purity and Holineſs of God: All thoſe Texts which plainly relate to the former of theſe, he applies to the latter; and then all that deny or doubt of any of his confuſed inexplicable Jargon, which, in the Cant of Infallibility, is the *pure Word of God*, and *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, are repreſented as Men deſtitute of the Spirit of Grace, wicked, unſanctify'd, ungodly Wretches.

In what he ſays concerning the Satisfaction of Chriſt, and the Juſtification of Sinners by Imputed Righteouſneſs, he repreſents it as the moſt monſtrous, abſurd and contradictory Doctrine in the World; and perhaps, as he underſtands it, it is ſo. But I ſhall ſhew preſently how effectually he has ſubverted the Chriſtian Revelation, and given it up into the Hands of Deiſts and Infidels; I would here only take Notice of his confounding the rational Evi-

dence of the Christian Doctrines to the Understanding, with the inward Sanctification of the Spirit. He says, *p.* 40. "I am of the "same Opinion with those that deny the Sa-"tisfaction of Christ, that it is an irrational "Doctrine; I mean, it could never have been "found out by any Reason that is not divine, "and it cannot be received by any Reason "that is not sanctify'd." What he here supposes is plainly this, that as the Christian Doctrines, particularly that of Christ's Satisfaction, could never have been discovered or revealed by any but God himself; so that they cannot be received, believed, or assented to, as true, *now they are revealed*, but by the Sanctification of the Spirit. This Principle is evidently false, and the Use he makes of it is most abominable: For, I beg to know of him, what One single Doctrine of Christianity there is, which a wicked Man may not receive, believe, or assent to, as True, and Divine; nay, which the Devil himself does not thus believe? This, I think, must be universally allow'd, that 'tis more than possible for Men to give intirely into Mr. *Bradbury*'s Scheme, to believe all that the Gospel reveals, *i. e.* to be of his Party or Opinion, without having any Thing of the Sanctification of the Spirit, or the least Fear of God before their Eyes.

Now, tho' a Man may firmly believe a Doctrine as revealed in Scripture, without believing Mr. *Bradbury*'s Sense or Explication of that Doctrine, yet this is what he cannot allow; for not to be of his Opinion concerning the Metaphysical Nature, the Person, the Satisfaction and Atonement of Christ, is with him the same

ſame thing as not to believe the Scripture, or to be no Chriſtian.

This Conduct muſt proceed from a Vanity and Inſolence, which are almoſt peculiar to the Man. But his entailing Practical Godlineſs on his own Scheme, and his charging all thoſe, whoſe Opinions in theſe Matters he does not like, with Irreligion, and Moral Wickedneſs, is ſtill worſe, and a plain Evidence that he knows not what Manner of Spirit he is of; for thus he goes on *p.* 46. "Mark "the perfect Man, and behold the Upright; "obſerve one who has not lift up his Soul to "Vanity, nor ſworn deceitfully, who lives "above the World, doing Juſtice, loving Mercy, and walking humbly with his God: "Enquire of that Perſon what he thinks of "revealed Religion; one that prays in his Family, and abounds in the Works of the "Lord; ask him his Opinion about the "Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, his Divinity, his "Union with Believers, and the Fellowſhip "of the Spirit; try whether ſuch a one will "tell you, this is all Cant. See what Diſcourſes are moſt reliſhed, by thoſe that are "of a humble and contrite Spirit, and tremble "at God's Word; who mind his Ordinances, "keep his Sabbaths, and will not turn aſide "from the Flocks of his Companions. How "vain is it for thoſe who deny the Faith, to "talk againſt Impoſitions; when practical Religion it ſelf comes under that Notion? How "abominable is it, when the Liberty they "plead for is not only oppoſed to the Doctrines "of the Goſpel; but to the Obſervation of "the Lord's Day, to the Worſhip of God in

" Families, to the Communion of Saints, and " the ſocial Devotion of the Churches? —— " They mean no more by Liberty, than an " Occaſion to the Fleſh." Would not any one be apt to conclude that all this muſt be certainly writ againſt the moſt vicious and profligate Wretches, that caſt off not only the Belief of Revelation, but the Practice alſo of all moral Virtue and Duty. And yet whoever obſerves the Caſt and Temper of the Man, muſt plainly ſee, that this is all levelled againſt thoſe who are not of his Mind, or who cannot agree with him in the Points which he is here contending for. I doubt not but an *Antinomian* in the Points of Satisfaction and Juſtification by Faith, and a *Sabellian*, or diſguiſed *Sccinian*, with reſpect to the Trinity, would return ſuch Anſwers to the Queſtions here propoſed, as ſhould wonderfully pleaſe him, and obtain his Licence to be a Chriſtian: But, if any one ſhould reject his Senſe and Interpretations in any of theſe Points, they ought to know, that they are Unbelievers, they can have no Communion with the Saints, and ſhall not have Mr. *Bradbury*'s Leave to be honeſt Men, or to worſhip God, or pray in their Families. If they will not come into his Scheme, and talk as down-right Nonſenſe, and palpable Abſurdities as he does, he will ſtrike them out of the Book of Life, and efface all the Ideas and Impreſſions of God and Religion upon their Souls. After all his Talk of ſanctify'd Reaſon, and the Illumination of the Spirit; I am ſure, if he breathes any Spirit here beſides human Frailty, and the Depth of Prejudice, it is a Spirit not very conſiſtent with the Chriſtian Meekneſs.

Jam

Jam Furor humanum noſtro de pectore ſenſum
Expulit, ac totum ſpirant præcordia Phœbum.

Does this Gentleman, while he is calumniating and falſly accuſing his Brethren, conſider whoſe Work he is doing, and by what Spirit he is inſtigated? Does he conſider, that he has any Account to give, or that he is under the Cognizance of a Supreme Inſpector and Judge? Or does he think that his Falſhoods and Calumnies are *ſanctify'd, as well as his Reaſon?* If he cannot make good theſe railing Accuſations, againſt thoſe who have provok'd him ſo much, by rejecting his human Impoſitions, and contending for the Sufficiency of Scripture alone as the only Teſt and Standard of divine Faith, he ought to remain for ever ſilent under the Shame and Reproach of a falſe Accuſer. I ſuppoſe the Scripture is the only Rule of Faith to Mr. *Bradbury* and thoſe that are of his Mind, and their Interpretations and Senſe of Scripture muſt be the only Rule to the reſt of Mankind; for upon any other Suppoſition, I challenge him, or any of his cooler and more learned Friends, to juſtify the impoſing or exacting any thing as neceſſary to Chriſtian Communion, which the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture has not expreſly and clearly made neceſſary to Salvation. But it would be but a low and mean Condeſcention in Mr. *Bradbury* to ſtoop to the Drudgery of Reaſoning; and perhaps he declines that Work, as the only Guard he has againſt carnal Reaſon: tho' he ſeems to depend very much upon Mr. *Wilcox* and Mr. *Comming*. What Mr. *Wilcox* may do, I cannot ſay; but I dare foretel that Mr. *Comming* will never appear in Defence of

Mr. *Bradbury*; and tho' I have a juſt Value for Mr. *Comming*, as a Gentleman of great Learning, Integrity and good Senſe, yet I am perſwaded that before it is over, he will find himſelf entirely loſt and confounded, in the Cauſe which he has now undertaken. But,

3. Mr. *Bradbury*'s moſt maſterly Strokes are yet behind. It muſt be own'd, that he has contended for revealed Religion in a Manner, which no Body has ever done before him; he has contended for it, by giving up all the Principles upon which it is poſſible to defend it: For ſpeaking of the meritorious Obedience, the Death and Sacrifice, the Propitiation and Atonement of Chriſt, and the Method of God's Grace in the Salvation of Sinners, thro' the Mediation and Interceſſion of his Son; he declares, that theſe *are all Abſurdities to the Reaſon of Man*; that *'tis contrary not only to the Luſts of People*, or to the carnal Mind, *but even to their moſt exalted Reaſon*; that tho' God has revealed it to us by his Spirit, yet even ſuppoſing this external Revelation, and all the rational objective Evidence of Chriſtianity, *it cannot enter into the Heart of Man*, but that the Satisfaction of Chriſt, notwithſtanding the Evidence of Revelation propoſed to the Underſtandings of Men, is ſtill an *irrational* Doctrine; nay, that it deſtroys *every Natural Idea that we have of divine Juſtice*; and that, *laying aſide the Evidence of Revelation, the Doctrine is ſo far from being true, that it is ridiculous.* See *p.* 39, 40, 41. where he has heaped up all the Abſurdities and Contradictions concerning Reaſon and Revelation, that could have been well thought of. If the Chriſtian Doctrines are ſuch as deſtroy

ſtroy every natural Idea we have of divine Juſtice, they muſt deſtroy every natural Idea we have of all other divine Perfections; for it is evident, that all the Natural and Moral Perfections of God, have a neceſſary inſeparable Connexion with, and Dependence upon, each other; ſo that whatever deſtroys every natural Idea of Juſtice, muſt equally deſtroy every natural Idea of all other Perfections in God, *i. e.* muſt deſtroy all the natural prior Evidence for the Being and Exiſtence of a God, and ſo leave no poſſible Ground or Footing whereon to ſupport any Revelation at all.

Again: If the Chriſtian Doctrines, abſtracted from the Evidence of Revelation, are in themſelves, and in the Nature and Reaſon of Things, ſo far from being true, *that they are ridiculous*, 'tis certain that no Revelation can make them otherwiſe than ridiculous. Revelation is the Light that renders Things viſible, that could not be diſcovered by the naked Eye of unaſſiſted Reaſon; 'tis like a Teleſcope, that brings the Object nearer, which was before too remote, and places it in a diſtinct and proper Point of View: But then it repreſents Things as they are, and Reaſon is ſtill the Eye by which they muſt be perceived and judged of. And to ſay that any Doctrine, which is in it ſelf, or in the prior Nature and Reaſon of the Thing, irrational and ridiculous, may be made true and reaſonable by Revelation, is the ſame Abſurdity as to ſay, that the Light, which renders Things viſible, alters the Nature of the Things themſelves; or that a Body, which is in its own Nature and Conſtitution a Cube, is, by barely becoming viſible, turned into a Sphere,

Sphere. According to this way of Talking, there can be no ſuch thing as Truth or Falſehood, Right or Wrong, or any neceſſary eſſential Difference in the Nature and Reaſon of Things.

Now every one muſt ſee it as a neceſſary Conſequence, from what has been ſaid, either that the Chriſtian Doctrines are not, and cannot poſſibly be true or divine; or elſe that Mr. *Bradbury* miſunderſtands them, and talks of them upon wrong Principles. Perhaps he is too far gone in the Conceit of Infallibility, ever to receive any farther Conviction himſelf; but I hope, the Generality of Chriſtians will chuſe rather to quit Mr. *Bradbury*'s Scheme, and ſuppoſe him a weak, paſſionate, prejudiced Man, than part at once with their Faith and Reaſon, and give up all the Principles and Evidence of Natural as well as Revealed Religion.

What a Notion muſt Mr. *Bradbury* have, and what an Account has he here given, of the Illumination and Sanctification of the Spirit; while he repreſents it as the Work and Office of the Spirit of God, to efface all the *Natural Ideas we have of divine Juſtice*, and conſequently of all the other divine Perfections; and thereby to eſtabliſh Faith upon the Ruins of Reaſon, and advance a Revelation, as from God, upon the entire Subverſion of Natural Religion!

Had the Apoſtles, and firſt Promulgers of Chriſtianity, given this Account of it, muſt not the whole World have rejected it with Diſdain, as a Religion intended to unman them, by deſtroying the common Principles of Reaſon, and converting them only to Idiocy, or wild Enthuſiaſm? For, ſure I am, that if his

Repre-

Repreſentation of this Matter be right and juſt; if he has conſidered the Scripture Revelation as it is in it ſelf, and has not miſtaken the Nature of it; none but a Fool or a Madman can be a Chriſtian.

That the Chriſtian Doctrines are in themſelves, and laying aſide the Teſtimony of Scripture, irrational, abſurd, and ridiculous, is the only Speculative Principle of Deiſm and Infidelity; and indeed granting the Principle to be true, as Mr. *Bradbury* does, the Conduct of thoſe who reject the Profeſſion and Belief of Chriſtianity upon this Foot, muſt be juſt and rational. So that I hope Mr. *Bradbury*, when he has a little cooled upon it, will ſeriouſly bethink himſelf what he has been doing; whether he has not been pulling down what he intended to build up; whether he has not effectually armed the Enemies of Chriſtianity againſt the Doctrines of the Goſpel, enabled them to fight againſt him with his own Weapons, and unanſwerably to pin him down to Deiſm and Infidelity upon his own Principles.

THE Nature *and* Conſequences OF ENTHUSIASM DEFENDED;

Againſt the Reflections of the Reverend Mr. SAMUEL FANCOURT, in his Eſſay concerning *Certainty* and *Infallibility*.

In a SECOND

LETTER

TO

Mr. *Tong*, Mr. *Robinſon*, Mr. *Smith*, and Mr. *Reynolds*.

TO

LETTER

IN A SECOND

FROM

ENTHUSIASM

OR

Nature and Consequences

THE



A SECOND LETTER TO

Mr. TONG, *Mr.* ROBINSON, *Mr.* SMITH, *and Mr.* REYNOLDS.

GENTLEMEN,

THE *Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity Stated and Defended*, came out with ſuch an Aire of Aſſurance, and appear'd to me ſo directly calculated to diſcourage all rational Freedom of Enquiry in Matters of great Importance; to bear down the cleareſt Evidence, and the moſt expreſs Declarations of Holy Scripture, by the contrary Weight of Human Authority; to prejudice the Judgments, and

and inflame the Paſſions of the People, by giving the Signal, and raiſing a groundleſs Outcry of Hereſy againſt your innocent Brethren; and in a Word, to diſtract and divide the Proteſtant diſſenting Churches, in laying a Foundation for implicit Faith, and encouraging Diſſenters to act upon the very fundamental Principle of *Popery*; that is, to hold faſt their Opinions without any farther Examination, and to believe Contradictions, under the vain and ſenſeleſs Pretext of oppoſing Faith to Reaſon; that I thought my ſelf obliged to expoſe this Proceedure with ſome Degree of Sharpneſs, to prevent, if poſſible, the Miſchiefs which I ſaw ariſing from ſuch Sort of Management.

I do not ſay, that you deſign'd all or any thing of this, for I believe the contrary; but I cannot help ſaying, that this then appeared to me the natural Tendency, as it has ſince proved the real Conſequence, of your Book, and of your whole Conduct in this Affair from firſt to laſt.

When you had ſtated the Queſtion relating to the Trinity in one main Propoſition, upon which you have thought fit to lay ſo mighty a Streſs as the Salvation of Souls, and the whole Buſineſs of Chriſtian Charity, Peace, and Communion, you declared your Reſolution *to contend earneſtly for it againſt all Oppoſers*, p. 18. Whether in that Declaration you proceeded on the Preſumption that no Body would dare oppoſe you, I cannot ſay; but really, *Gentlemen*, you muſt give me leave to ſay, that after ſuch a Declaration, and all that has been ſaid againſt you from ſo many Hands, your long Silence in this

this Cauſe is a little ſurprizing; and indeed I know not how to account for it, unleſs I ſhould ſuppoſe it owing to certain Convictions that you have carried the Matter a little too far, and have advanced ſomething that is not very defenſible.

The great Things you have promiſed, or threatned rather, ſeem after all to be dwindled into *an Eſſay concerning Certainty and Infallibility, or ſome Reflections upon the Nature and Conſequences of Enthuſiaſm conſidered*; which the Author, as your Defender, directs in a Letter to me. I have choſen to direct my Thoughts upon his Performance in a Letter to you, rather than to the Author of the *Reflections*, for theſe two Reaſons; *firſt*, becauſe you are the Principals in this Debate; and *ſecondly*, becauſe I would lay you under ſome Obligation to defend your ſelves more effectually than this Writer has done, or I fear is like to do.

Without any farther Apology therefore for the Preſumption of troubling you with a ſecond Letter, I ſhall proceed to examine Mr. *Fancourt*'s Reaſonings; and to ſhew wherein I think he falls ſhort of what he promiſes, and how far I apprehend you are concerned, either to appear in your own Defence, or look out for one that is more able to defend you.

The Author, in his *Preface*, takes Care to acquaint the Publick with the ſpecial Motives, which induced him to appear as my Adverſary, and your Defender, in this Controverſy; and tho' he ſeems to doubt whether the Reaſons he aſſigns will ſufficiently excuſe him, yet he preſumes he ſhall at leaſt be *deem'd the more excuſable, on the Account of the ſpecial Relation he*

has the Honour to ſtand in to Three of you; One having been his Tutor, Another his Predeceſſor in the Place he removed from, and a Third the Miniſter principally concern'd in his Ordination. Thus he has founded his ſpecial Attempt upon Three ſpecial Relations, which perhaps had never been heard of before, and I ſuppoſe will not be underſtood now. The Relation of Maſter and Scholar, while the mutual Obligation of Teaching and Learning continues, is ſomething intelligible; but when that Obligation ceaſes, I think the Relation muſt ceaſe with it, and the Diſciple may become the Maſter: And what ſpecial Relation ſhould ariſe between two Miniſters, who happen to ſucceed each other at a conſiderable Interval of Time to the Charge of a particular Congregation, I cannot ſee, unleſs *his Predeceſſor help'd him to the Place; and then the Obligation is viſible, tho' the Relation will be ſtill to ſeek.* A like myſterious is the ſpecial Relation conſtituted between the Ordainer and the Perſon ordained; and tho' this muſt be allow'd to have been a Piece of Service, yet I cannot imagine wherein the very peculiar Obligation of it ſhould lie, unleſs one was at Liberty to ſuppoſe (what is not true in the preſent Caſe) that if the Gentleman who befriended him with his Aſſiſtance in that Affair, had not done it, no Body elſe would. So that 'tis evident, that this Gentleman by Relation means Obligation, and by his Relatives his Benefactors.

But he needed not have gone ſo far to fetch Reaſons for attacking me, ſince that is what every one had an equal Right to who thought me in the wrong. It had been ſufficient for him

him to have ſaid, that he look'd upon the Cauſe he eſpouſed to be juſt, that he thought a Defence of it neceſſary, and apprehended himſelf capable in ſome Meaſure of defending it. But I am ſorry he ſhould inſiſt only upon theſe poor worldly Inducements, and carnal Motives; a Reſpect to Perſons, Obligations received, and the like; which ought to be of no Conſideration or Weight at all with us in our Enquiries after Truth.

Mr. *Fancourt* having thus declared the weighty Reaſons which engaged him in this War, and told the World that he took up Arms in Defence of his Relations, addreſſes himſelf to me; and what ſeems to be the main Deſign of his Book, is, to ſhew the vaſt Eſteem he has for *you*, his *near and dear Relations and Benefactors*, and how angry he is with *me* for preſuming to write againſt you. For my part, I did not know that Mr. *Fancourt* ſtood in any ſuch near Relation, or that he was under any ſuch peculiar Obligations to you; tho' if I had, perhaps I might not have ſpared any thing I have ſaid.

He begins by comparing the Spirit of the two Books; and here he takes Occaſion to ſay the beſt things he can of *you*, and the worſt of *me*. Had I a Mind to make Reprizals upon him, I might here ſpend three or four Pages in comparing his Manner and Way of Writing, his Language and Stile, in ſome Part of his Eſſay, with that of an ingenious ſort of Diſputants in low Life, who in ſtrict Juſtice to their Arguments are uſually left to the Conviction of a Cold Bath: But the Reader, I dare ſay, will excuſe me this Trouble, ſince every

one muſt ſee that his Raillery is inſipid, as well as unmannerly; and that it is not without Reaſon that he declares his mortal Enmity to Wit.

I ſhall ſay nothing directly to his Reflections upon my Title-Page, becauſe I hope to make it appear, that his whole Book is a Juſtification of it. As for this Author, and ſome others, who, as he ſeems inclinable to think, are not like to be diſappointed as I was, in your *Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity Stated and Defended*; I do not in the leaſt envy them the Satisfaction they may take in the Certainty of indubitable Perſwaſion: I deſire only they would be ſo good as to ſuffer me to make the Evidence of Things, as it appears to my own Underſtanding, the Ground of my Perſwaſion.

What he next inſiſts upon, is my Notion of *Sincerity*; and indeed he talks of it as if he had never heard the Word before, or knew not what is meant by it. He ſeems willing to make his Reader believe that thoſe who make ſo much ado about Sincerity in this Affair, would ſhut Truth out of their Account; as if it was a thing indifferent, or at leaſt not neceſſary, whether Men be in the Right, or hold the Truth in any Caſe whatever or not, provided they do but act according to their *real Perſwaſion*, and think they are in the Right: He would have it thought that I have ſet up for Sincerity without Truth; and ſuppoſes, that I not only wiſh for, but think I ſee the Dawn of ſuch a glorious Day, when none but a *Papiſt* ſhall maintain, that there is any one Truth in the whole Goſpel indiſpenſably neceſſary by the Covenant of Grace to be believed, in order to Salvation; and goes on to repreſent as a

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Conſequence of what I have ſaid about Sincerity, *that a Man might renounce Chriſtianity, and worſhip the Hoſts of Heaven, if not the Devil too, and yet have a rational Confidence towards God, had he but the good Luck to be ſincere in ſuch his Renunciation and Worſhip*, p. 8, 9. I dare ſay Mr. *Fancourt* is better acquainted with the Practice of Sincerity, than he ſeems to be with the Nature of it; which I always underſtood to be a Man's acting up ſteadily to what appears to his own Underſtanding to be moſt juſt and reaſonable, or moſt agreeable to the Mind and Will of God, *after a ſtrict and impartial Examination.* He who makes *the beſt Uſe he can* of his rational Faculties, in examining the Grounds and Reaſons of what he receives and embraces for Truth, is ſincere in his Enquiries; and he who acts *according to his Judgment, after he has taken all the Care he can to inform it right, by an impartial Examination*, is ſincere in his Practice: and both theſe are neceſſary to denominate the Perſon ſincere. Now where any Truth, which concerns our Duty to God, and the Way to Salvation, is ſo evident in it ſelf, or ſo clearly contain'd in the Chriſtian Revelation, that a ſincere Enquirer, or one who examines the Matter impartially, cannot miſs it; in all ſuch Caſes, the Truth will be as neceſſary, as equally and indiſpenſably neceſſary, as Sincerity; becauſe it will have a neceſſary inſeparable Connexion with, and Dependance on, Sincerity it ſelf: But where the Truth is ſo difficult in it ſelf, or ſo obſcurely revealed, that a ſincere Enquirer may not be able to reach it; in this Caſe, the Truth, whatever it be in it ſelf, or in its own abſtract Nature, can be of no Neceſſity or Importance to the Perſon;

but God will accept of his ſincere Endeavours to know and do his Will, and not puniſh him for his involuntary and unavoidable Miſtakes; for ſurely God will not call Men to an account for any Talents which he had never put into their Hands. And tho' fallible paſſionate Men may boldly uſurp the Prerogative of the Almighty, and ſet up their own Judgments and Apprehenſions of Things, even in the moſt doubtful and difficult Caſes, as the Rule and Standard of Truth and Falſhood, Right and Wrong; yet certainly God will not, in his moſt righteous Judgment, condemn any Man for not knowing what he could not poſſibly know, or for not believing what, after *his utmoſt Enquiries, and the beſt uſe he could make of his Faculties*, he thus could ſee no reaſon to believe.

Having thus ſtated the Caſe, I think the Author's Objections confute themſelves; for to make good his Conſequences againſt my Principle of Sincerity, he muſt ſhew, that an Impartial Enquirer, *after the beſt uſe he can make of his rational Faculties*, may yet ſee ſufficient Reaſons to renounce his Chriſtianity, or to worſhip the Hoſts of Heaven; and he muſt ſhew that tho' God and the Devil are two oppoſite Maſters, and tho' all their Commands and Injunctions are directly contrary to each other, that for a Man to *worſhip* the Devil, and have at the ſame time a *Rational* Confidence towards God, is not a direct Contradiction; or he muſt ſhew, that a Man, who is capable of diſcovering the Being and Exiſtence of the Devil, is not yet capable, *upon his ſincere Enquiries, or the beſt Uſe he can make of his Faculties*, to diſcover

cover the Being and Exiſtence of a God above the Devil. But this Writer ſeems unhappily reſolved to diſtinguiſh himſelf in the way of Trifling, beyond all that have gone before him, and therefore cannot ſatisfy himſelf with common Abſurdities.

And here I may take occaſion to explain to him, better than he has done it for me, what that Time is which I hope and pray for. I long then for the Time, when the Sophiſtry of ſuch ſort of Reaſoning, as he has here given us a Sample of, ſhall be more generally underſtood and exploded; when Bigotry and Enthuſiaſm ſhall give Place to Charity, and a rational Freedom of Enquiry; when the ordinary Miniſters of the Goſpel ſhall no longer be put to ſuch poor Shifts to free themſelves from the direct Claim of Infallibility; and when thoſe who diſclaim it in Words, ſhall do ſo in Reality and Truth; when Men ſhall no longer affront and mock the Almighty, by complementing his Word as the only Rule of their Faith, while they ſubſtitute their own Words inſtead of it, and pretend that the Word of God is not particular, expreſs, or clear enough, *even in Things neceſſary*, 'till they have explain'd and improved the Revelation; when nothing ſhall be pretended as neceſſary to Chriſtian Peace and Unity, but what Chriſt has made neceſſary to Salvation; and, in a word, I long for the glorious Day, when the Chriſtian People ſhall be admitted to the Communion of Saints, and be allow'd all the Benefits and Privileges of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, upon Scripture-Terms. This is the Time, and State of Things, I hope and pray for; and this the

happy Day I earneſtly wiſh, at leaſt to ſee the Dawn of.

If this be *the very Dreggs of Paganiſm*, then it muſt be allow'd that this Writer has given a juſt and fair Repreſentation of me, and of this whole Affair. But if all this is nothing elſe but his own Miſtake; if he ſhall appear not at all to have read and conſider'd what has been ſaid by the beſt Writers upon this Subject; and if he ſhall be found only to have trifled, where he ought to have been moſt open and ſincere: If this, I ſay, ſhould be the Caſe, as I imagine it will, I muſt leave the World about us, to judge of the Strength of that Cauſe which needs ſuch Supports. And however the Author may pleaſe himſelf, and ſome of his particular Friends, by this way of Talking, yet I cannot but ſay that I ſhould have thought this manner of Reaſoning here wholly inexcuſable, had he not ſo honeſtly given the World to underſtand, in this *Preface*, that he enter'd the Liſts in this Controverſy from the particular Love and Gratitude he bears to you.

Your affectionate Defender entertains his Reader almoſt every where with loud and bitter Complaints of my having treated you with an unworthy Diſreſpect, and expoſed you to Ridicule and Contempt. It was ever my Opinion, that the Truth ought not to ſuffer from any Reſpect to Perſons; and that where Men's common Religious Intereſts are concern'd, all Mankind are upon a Level, as having all the ſame Right to ſpeak out, tho' by reaſon of the Terrors of this World they have not always the ſame Liberty: But for my own part, I ſhall

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ſtill think my ſelf at Liberty to repreſent the Defects and Inconſiſtencies of an Adverſary's Reaſoning in the cleareſt Light I can; and if when they are ſtript of their artificial Colourings and Diſguiſes, they ſhould happen to appear ridiculous in a plain *Engliſh* Dreſs, the Fault is none of mine. If this therefore be the true Ground of the Complaint, as I ſuſpect it is, I muſt be content to bear the Imputation, unleſs he will be ſo good as to pardon me without Repentance; and if by treating you rudely, and expoſing you to Ridicule and Contempt, he means expoſing the Weakneſs and Inſufficiency of your Scheme, and way of Talking, I fear I ſhall incur the ſame Cenſure in replying to him.

I ſhall now conſider what the Author has offered by way of Argument, relating to *Certainty* and *Infallibility*, and the Miſtakes and Miſapplications he thinks I have made about it. I ſhall poſtpone the great Charge of having abuſed and miſrepreſented you, by forcing upon you the Conſequences of an Infallibility which you never pretended to: I ſay, I ſhall poſtpone this high Charge to the laſt Place, becauſe it will appear in a clearer Light, when I have examined what your Defender has made of *his* Certainty and Infallibility, as he would be thought to differ from *me*.

Before I proceed farther, I muſt obſerve, that the learned Writer of this Eſſay has taken a great deal of needleſs Pains, in endeavouring to ſhew that the Word *Certainty* is ſometimes uſed in a lower Senſe than that in which I have defined it, and ſo as to include all the different Degrees and Meaſures of Probability, and at the ſame time to confound

and blend in one Word all the infinite Degrees of Evidence, from the higheſt down to the loweſt. And tho' it is evident that the Signification of the Word, when thus uſed, muſt be ſo general and indeterminate, as in effect to ſignify nothing at all, or to be capable of ſignifying any thing at Pleaſure; yet I acknowledge this improper Uſe of the Word in a looſe and popular way of ſpeaking; and, that in common Diſcourſe, where no great Matter depends upon it, *certain* is often put for *probable*. So that when this Author quotes Scripture againſt me, and philoſophizes *in his own Way*, he oppoſes not me, but an Adverſary of his own making; and when he ſets his School-boys upon me, to convince me by *Certus*, *Certior*, *Certiſſimus*, if he underſtands by *certain* only *probable*, and his Lads mean no more (as they ought not, if he inſtructs them right) than *probable*, *more probable*, *moſt probable*, he is contending for nothing but what I had yielded. But thus it is to fall under the Reſentments of a School-maſter; for tho' I could not be ignorant of this frequent inaccurate Uſe of Words in common Speech, and therefore obſerved that *Certainty*, in a looſe and popular way of ſpeaking, was often put for *Probability*, and *Certain* for *Probable*; yet I thought it neceſſary to fix the Boundaries of ſtrict and proper Certainty, ſo as to diſtinguiſh it from all thoſe infinite Degrees of Probability below it, with all which it is too often confounded in the Argumentative Diſcourſes of learned Men, to the great Advantage of Bigotry and Enthuſiaſm.

But the Author thinks he has found a ſingle Inſtance, in which I have uſed the Word

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Certain in a lower Senſe than my own Definition of it will juſtify; *and he ſeems ſo well pleas'd with the Diſcovery, that he can hardly contain himſelf.* What he inſiſts upon, is, my ſaying, "That "you diſcover'd the ſame Strength of Perſwaſion "in what you were contending for, as if you "were as certain, or had the ſame Degree of E-"vidence, as that the Sun is up at Noon-day." Now he thinks that the Sun's being up at Noon-day is not ſtrictly certain at all, ſo as to render the contrary impoſſible; and the Inſtances he gives to the contrary may afford the Reader ſome Diverſion, ſince they do not in the leaſt imply, or ſuppoſe the Poſſibility of the contrary. 'Tis true, God may create a Light at Mid-night, equal to the Light of the Sun at Noon, or Mid-day; but no Body would ſay this would be Noon-day, ſince what we mean by Noon, or Mid-day, is the Sun's being upon the upper Part of the Meridian. So the Sun may be totally Eclipſed at Noon, in which caſe it might poſſibly be as dark as if it were Mid-night; yet ſtill while the Sun is above the Horizon, and upon the Meridian, it muſt be Noon, or Mid-day. Again, God by his abſolute Power might, if he pleaſed, retard or accelerate the apparent Motion of the Sun, or the real Motion of the Earth, ſo that from Noon to Noon it ſhould be 48, or only 12 Hours; in which caſe we ſhould ſay the Days were miraculouſly lengthened, or ſhortened; yet ſtill in this, or any other extraordinary Caſe, the Sun's coming to the Meridian above the Horizon, muſt make what we call Noon, or Mid-day. So that our Idea of Noon muſt have a neceſſary Connexion with the I-

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dea of the Sun upon the upper Part of the Meridan; and nothing can alter the Idea of the one, but what muſt equally affect the Idea of the other. And therefore Mr. *Fancourt* may, if he pleaſes, let this ſtand as a Propoſition certainly true, that the Sun is up, or upon the Meridian, at Noon-day; ſince, for any thing I can ſee to the contrary, it muſt be ſo whether he will or no. I ſhould not have troubled the Reader upon ſuch a Trifle, had not this Author's Triumph made it in ſome Meaſure neceſſary. But I am not willing to ſay any thing more on this Part of his Performance, becauſe I would not provoke this Gentleman to write an *Eſſay concerning the Sun*, or ſome deep *Reflections upon Noon-day*.

But let us hear this Author's own Account of Certainty, and which he gives us as what you your ſelves intended by it. He tells us therefore, That "there is an Objective, and "there is a Subjective Certainty: The for-"mer is no other than the real Truth and "Importance of a Thing conſidered abſtractly "in it ſelf; the latter is the firm Perſwaſion "we have in our Minds concerning its Truth "or Importance. *He adds*, Now the Certainty "of which thoſe Gentlemen ſpeak is Subjective "only; which ſuppoſes that the Judgment be "actually formed, and an indubitable Perſwa-"ſion that the Judgment we have formed is "true; or (in their own words) the knowing "we are in the right, *p.* 25." I think it muſt be evident to every one, that Certainty and Uncertainty, Truth and Falſhood, Right and Wrong, Doubtful or Indubitable, *&c.* are all

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of them Terms, and Ways of Speaking, taken from the Operations of the Mind, and the different Appearances of Things to the Understanding. And therefore, to make any of these Distinctions in the absolute Nature of Things, abstracted from the Operations of the Mind, or the Acts of the Understanding, must be the grosſeſt Abuſe of Words, or a talking without Ideas. There is nothing in the Things themſelves, abſolutely conſider'd, but real Exiſtence, and the neceſſary natural Relations they ſtand in to each other. Thoſe who talk intelligibly, I ſuppoſe by Objective Certainty mean, the Objective Evidence it ſelf, or the Nature and Reaſon of Things, as they exiſt Objectively, and by their Ideas, in the Mind; and by Subjective Certainty, the actual Perception of the Nature and Reaſon of Things as they exiſt thus Objectively in the Mind, or the perceived Relations of the Agreement or Diſagreement of our own Ideas.

However, if the Author has been a little loſt in his Objective, he runs into the very Wilds of Enthuſiaſm when he comes to his Subjective Certainty; for he defines it by indubitable Perſwaſion; and he tells me, that by Knowledge and Certainty, *the Certainty of Knowledge, knowing you are in the Right*, and ſuch like Expreſſions in your *Introduction*, you mean only that you are Strongly or Indubitably perſwaded. If this be ſo, 'tis evident you muſt confound Seeing with Feeling; and that by being certain of a Thing, you mean only that you hold it faſt. Every one muſt ſee that there is no Manner of Connexion betwixt Indubitable Perſwaſion, and the real Truth or Certainty of Things, ſince the Perſwaſion may

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be equally Strong and Indubitable, whether a Man be in the Right or in the Wrong. This Certainty therefore of Indubitable Perſwaſion, is ſuch a ſort of Certainty, as a Man may have of the Exiſtence of a Thing that does not exiſt, or of the Truth of what is abſolutely Falſe and Contradictory.

But here the Author has two ſorts of Certainty in one; for having defined Certainty by Indubitable Perſwaſion, and being aware that Indubitable Perſwaſion has nothing to do with the real Truth and Certainty of Things; and conſequently, that his Definition had no Relation to the Thing defined; he is forced to diſtinguiſh between Rational and Irrational Certainty, or between a Certainty with and without ſufficient Evidence, *i. e.* between Certainty and no Certainty, Truth and Falſhood, Light and Darkneſs: which yet he includes under the common Name and Definition of Certainty. *A notable Account of Certainty indeed!* and a Diſtinction much of the ſame Nature with that of a Preacher, who having occaſion to mention the Word *Perfectneſs*, told his Hearers that they ought to take Notice there were two ſorts of Perfectneſs, *namely*, *Perfectneſs and Unperfectneſs!*

His diſtinguiſhing between Certainty, with and without ſufficient Evidence, while he confines the Notion of Certainty to Indubitable Perſwaſion, will afford him no Relief; for either Indubitable Perſwaſion muſt be Certainty in every one alike, or elſe his own Indubitable Perſwaſion muſt be the Rule and Meaſure of Certainty to the reſt of Mankind: The latter, I preſume, he will not ſay; and therefore Indubitable Perſwaſion muſt be Certainty

tainty in every one alike: Which is to remove all the Boundaries between Truth and Falſehood, Right and Wrong, and to ſuppoſe that the moſt contradictory Things in the World may be equally True and Certain. If he ſhould ſay, that by real Certainty, he means that Indubitable Perſwaſion which is well-grounded, or built upon ſufficient Evidence, wherever it is, whether in himſelf, or any Body elſe; as this would be going off from his own Account of the Matter, where he has placed Certainty in Indubitable Perſwaſion, as the very Nature and Definition of the Thing, ſo it would be ſaying nothing at all: for ſince the Queſtion is where this true Indubitable Perſwaſion is to be found, and Men of equal Parts and Integrity have hitherto been divided about it in certain Points, it would not tend much to the Information of the World, to tell us, that the true Perſwaſion muſt be found where it is, or that he who is in the Right is in the Right.

If your Defender has been unhappy in his Attempt to get rid of the Abſurdity of an uncertain Certainty, by placing the Nature of Certainty in Uncertainty it ſelf, or defining it by indubitable Perſwaſion, which has no manner of Connexion with the real Truth and Certainty of Things; ſo, by a like Device, he endeavours to evade the Force of what I had ſaid about ſtrict and proper, *i. e.* infallible Certainty. The Author, by Infallibility, thinks fit to underſtand the Infallibility of the Intellectual Faculty, as abſtracted from its Act and Object. Now, ſhould I ſuppoſe, or grant all that he has advanced upon this Head to be both intelligible and true, as I doubt it is neither,

neither, yet it would not in the leaſt affect any Thing I have ſaid. Could this Gentleman have made it out, that a Determination of the Judgment by infallible Evidence, is not an infallible Determination; or that thoſe who have attain'd, in particular Caſes, the certain infallible Knowledge of Things, however they come by it, are not thus far infallible, and very fit and proper Perſons to be infallible Guides to others: I ſay, could he have made this out, he had contradicted me, and ſhewn the Weakneſs of the Principle I argued from. But this he has not been able to do. However, when he had wrought himſelf up to Reſolution, in Defence of his *ſpecial Relations*, to write *an Eſſay concerning Certainty and Infallibility*, it was fit for him to ſay ſomething, and it may not be amiſs to conſider what he has ſaid.

The Foundation then of all that he has ſaid concerning Infallibility, he gives us in theſe Words: "Not to contend about mere Words, "give me leave to explain a little what I take "to be your Brethren's Senſe of an infallible "Judgment, when they declare they are far "from pretending to ſuch a Judgment about "Goſpel-Truth and Error. By the Judgment "here, I ſuppoſe them to underſtand the *De-*"*termining Faculty it ſelf*, and not any parti-"cular Determination of this Faculty; or (if "you will) the very Power that judges, and "not any particular Judgments that are form-"ed by this Power. And the Judgment is "then infallible, when it cannot be deceived, "or when it is impoſſible for it to determine "wrong."

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An Infallibility of Faculty in it ſelf, or in its own abſtract Nature, as diſtinct from any particular Determinations, muſt be an abſolute unlimited Infallibility; ſince to ſay, that a Faculty is infallible in it ſelf, or in its own Nature, as abſtracted from all its particular Determinations, may yet in particular Caſes determine wrong, is a plain Contradiction; for if in particular Inſtances it may determine wrong, the Reaſon of its Infallibility in other Caſes muſt be ſought for, not in the Faculty it ſelf, but ſomewhere elſe; ſince it is evident that a Faculty cannot be infallible in it ſelf, or in its own abſtract Nature, unleſs it is abſolutely and univerſally ſo. This Author therefore has been ſo kind as to juſtify me, even while he is bringing one of his main Charges againſt me, *viz.* My having ſuppoſed you to have diſclaimed no more than an abſolute unlimited Infallibility.

But I muſt not diſſemble a plain Truth, which is, that he immediately contradicts himſelf; for he has no ſooner raiſed the fine Structure of Infallibility upon the Foundation of an abſtract Faculty, but he preſently pulls it down again with his own Hands; for he goes on thus: "It matters not in the Caſe "before us, whether this Infallibility (*viz.* "the Infallibility of the Faculty) be natural "or acquir'd; whether it ariſes from the *in-* "*trinſick Perfection of the Faculty*, which can- "not but ſee Things as they are, and deter- "mine accordingly; or from the over-power- "ing Brightneſs of that objective or extrinſick "Evidence, which is ſure to attend it, and to "ſecure it againſt Miſtakes in all its Deter-

" minations. It matters not, whether this " Infallibility be absolute and unlimited, such " as extends to every Thing; or whether it " be restrained to some particular Objects on- " ly: Whether it be a constant and an a- " biding Quality, such as is never separated " from the Judgment; or whether it be oc- " casional and transient, enjoy'd at some cer- " tain Seasons only, and for some extraordi- " nary Purposes. Yet still so far, and so long, " as the Judgment is infallible, it can't possibly, " in such Things, and for that Time, be de- " ceiv'd.

But how comes it about that it matters not whether an Infallibility of the Faculty be an Infallibility of the Faculty or not? If it matters not whether this Gentleman differs from me or no, why does he pretend to differ? Does he write Essays in mere Wantonness, or only to please his Friends and Benefactors? The Sum of all that he here says, is this: By the Judgment here, I suppose your Brethren to understand the determining Faculty it self, abstracted from any particular Determination; but then you must know, that it matters not whether this Infallibility of the Faculty be an Infallibility of the Faculty, or an Infallibility of the objective Evidence, or the Infallibility of the extrinsick Means of conveying the objective Evidence to the Mind, or any other sort of Infallibility; but 'tis enough, that so far, and so long as a Person is infallible, he cannot in such Things, and for that Time be deceived: And tho' the Infallibility of the Faculty as such must extend to all the particular Determinations of that Faculty, yet it matters not whether this Infallibility be

limited

limited, or unlimited, universal, or restrained to some particular Objects only; or, in one Word, it matters not whether this Learned Writer talks consistently, or intelligibly, or no, provided he does but seem to differ from me.

But the Author finds himself so much at a loss in fixing his Idea of Infallibility, that having first placed it in the Faculty, and then supposed that it matters not whether it is placed in the Faculty or no, he runs from the Faculty to the Object, to the Evidence, to the External Assistance, *&c.* and brings it at length to this sure Conclusion, that so far as the Judgment is infallible, it is infallible, or cannot err. If he could have shewn that an infallible Determination of the Judgment could be made in any Case without the Preception of infallible Evidence, he had contradicted me, and said something to his Purpose; but since he has left this untouch'd, I am not at all concerned in any of his fine Speculations about the Infallibility of Abstract Faculties. I was not Writing an Essay concerning Infallibility; and did not pretend to consider all the Grounds and Reasons upon which an Agent, with regard to his Faculties, actual Determinations, and outward Assistances, might be denominated infallible. It was enough for me to shew what was necessary and sufficient to constitute an infallible Guide; and all that is here necessary, I suppose to be the certain infallible Knowledge of the Way, however the Person comes by it, whether he found it out by an infallible Faculty, or received it by Revelation: Or, lastly, whether he came by his infallible

Certainty in the Exerciſe of his own natural Faculties, in which he might have err'd, but did not. If a Man, tho' by Chance, or mere Accident, ſhould hit upon a certain infallible Rule to determine the Longitude, I ſuppoſe it might anſwer the Purpoſe as well, as if it had been ſent directly from Heaven, or found out by an infallible Faculty. He who has the certain infallible Knowledge of a diſputable Point, in which others cannot obtain ſuch Certainty, and appears alſo to be a Man of Uprightneſs and Integrity, is doubtleſs qualify'd for an infallible Guide to others; and no Body would ſcruple to receive and own him as ſuch, who takes it for granted, or once believes, that he has that infallible certain Knowledge in the Caſe which he pretends to. And this is all the Infallibility that Mankind are, or ever have been concern'd in, with reſpect to infallible Guides or Teachers.

The Miracles upon which the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion is founded, were wrought to prove, not the Infallibility of the Apoſtles Faculties, but the certain infallible Truth of the Doctrines they taught; and tho' the Apoſtles might poſſibly have err'd, or been miſtaken, concerning any ſuper-natural Revelation made to them, in it ſelf conſidered: yet ſince they had the Power of working Miracles given them to confirm the Truth of the Doctrines they had received; and ſince alſo it was impoſſible that God ſhould ſet his Seal to a Lie, or ſuffer any falſe Doctrine to be confirmed by ſuch numerous Miracles, without controuling them by a ſuperior Power; from hence the Apoſtles had as infallible a Know-

ledge,

ledge, or Certainty, of the Truth of the Doctrines, as they could have of their own Exiſtence, and the Being of a God. And it was plainly from this infallible objective Evidence of Miracles, proving the infallible Truth and Certainty of the Doctrines, that Chriſtianity grew and prevailed, and that the Apoſtles were received as infallible Teachers; and not from any ſuppoſed Metaphyſical abſtract Infallibility of the Apoſtles Faculties. Now it was a ſtrict and proper Certainty, as diſtinguiſhed from bare Belief, Opinion, or Perſwaſion; and which, as thus diſtinguiſhed, will be always infallible Certainty, which I apprehended you to have claim'd: And becauſe the Author charges me with a groſs, if not willful Miſrepreſentation of your plain Words in this Caſe, I ſhall here recall this Matter to a farther Examination.

The Paſſage which I am ſo warmly charged with, as having perverted and miſrepreſented, is in your *Introduction*, p. 5. where you ſay, "We are far from pretending to an "infallible Judgment about Goſpel-Truth "and Error; but we take it to be an agreed "Point with *Proteſtants*, that there may be "Certainty where there is not Infallibility: "and none can deny this, unleſs they will "venture to aſſert, that we can in no Caſe "know we are in the right, but by being "aſſured that it is impoſſible for us in any "Caſe to be in the wrong[22]. In this Paſſage I did indeed ſuppoſe, that by Certainty, and knowing we are in the right, you underſtood the Words Certainty and Knowledge in a ſtrict and proper Senſe, as diſtinguiſhed from

bare Belief, Opinion, or Perſwaſion; upon which Suppoſition all that I ſaid about it muſt have been the juſt and neceſſary Conſequences of the Principle it ſelf: And the Reaſon I had to underſtand you ſo, was, becauſe I ſaw that the Words taken in any other Senſe, muſt render all you here ſay perfectly trifling and inſignificant; and I could not well imagine that learned Men, in an argumentative Diſcourſe, and when they ſeemed to be laying down a general Principle, intended to ſay juſt nothing. But I am now told that by Certainty, knowing you are in the right, Certainty of Knowledge, and ſuch like Expreſſions, you mean only Belief, or Opinion, that you firmly believe, or are indubitably perſwaded. I muſt here obſerve by the way, that dubitable or indubitable, when join'd with Belief or Perſwaſion, do not in the leaſt affect the real Truth or Exiſtence of Things. A Man may be in the right, where he has great Doubts or Scruples in his Mind whether he is in the right or not; as he may be in the wrong, where his Perſwaſion is moſt ſtrong and indubitable. And indeed, the Strength and Indubitableneſs of the Perſwaſion in Matters of a doubtful and diſputable Nature, is generally owing more to the Force of *Enthuſiaſm* and vain Confidence, than to the Clearneſs of the real objective Evidence. However, I ſhall not ſtand with you in this Point, but readily grant you all the Strength and Indubitableneſs of Perſwaſion you can deſire: And ſince by Certainty, you mean only indubitable Perſwaſion; and by knowing, only believing, you are in the Right; I ſhall ſubſtitute the one for the other;

other: and then what you ſay is this; "We "are far from pretending to an infallible "Judgment about Goſpel-Truth and Error; "but we take it to be an agreed Point with "*Proteſtants*, that there may be an indubita-"ble Perſwaſion, where there is not Infalli-"bility; and none can deny this, unleſs they "will venture to aſſert, that we can in no "Caſe firmly believe we are in the right, "but by being aſſured that it is impoſſible "for us in any Caſe to be in the wrong".

It would indeed be very ſtrange, if *Proteſtants* and all Mankind ſhould not be agreed in this, that there may be a firm Belief, or indubitable Perſwaſion, where there is not Infallibility, or even the leaſt Truth or common Senſe. The Zealots of all Parties are generally ſo firm and indubitable in their different and contrary Perſwaſions, as to put this Matter beyond all Doubt; and he muſt certainly be a very bold Man, who ſhould venture to aſſert, that we can in no Caſe believe we are in the right, without being aſſured that it is impoſſible for us in any Caſe to be in the wrong. It will be to no Purpoſe to ſay, that you ſuppoſe your indubitable Perſwaſion to be well grounded; for ſince this is eſſential to all Belief or Perſwaſion whatever, and no one can believe any Thing at all, without ſuppoſing he has ſufficient Reaſon for it; and ſince alſo there is no more Connexion betwixt *your* indubitable Perſwaſion and the real Truth of Things, than betwixt that of *another Man's* to the contrary; all that you can bring your indubitable Perſwaſion to, is only this, that as it may poſſibly be right, ſo

it may as poſſibly be wrong. My great Crime then, it ſeems, is, that I have preſum'd to underſtand your Words in the only Senſe of which they are capable, without ſuppoſing you to trifle and talk unintelligibly. But ſince your Defender has thought convenient to explain your Meaning into nothing, I am content to leave it there, 'till you ſhall be pleaſed to let us know, whether you intended to be underſtood in any Senſe at all, or not.

You endeavour, *p.* 8. to obviate an Objection, which you apprehended might naturally ariſe from your Way of Talking, or from that Air of ſtrict and proper, *i. e.* infallible Certainty, which runs through your whole Diſcourſe. You ſay, "Perhaps it will be ſaid, "tho' Men may be allowed to argue and reaſon one with another in ſuch Points as "theſe, yet they ſhould not be poſitive nor "importunate; they ſhould forbear Admonition and Reproof, which looks like aſſuming an Authority over their Brethren, and "accuſing the other Side of Dullneſs or Obſtinacy"; you might have added, of Hereſy and damnable Error.

Now to this Objection you immediately reply, that "Indeed as for thoſe that are not "yet arrived *at ſuch a Certainty of Knowledge "and Faith in this great Doctrine*, it would "be very improper for them to preſs it ſo "earneſtly upon others; they ought firſt to "be well perſwaded in their own Minds: But "if the Doctrine be true, it is poſſible it may "*be known* to be true; and thoſe that know "it to be ſo, may be allowed to tell others "what they *believe*, both of the Truth and

"Impor-

" Importance of it: and this may be done with-
" out Vain-glory in themſelves, or uncharita-
" ble Contempt of thoſe that are otherwiſe
" minded". Here you ſeem to diſtinguiſh betwixt the higheſt Sort of Evidence, *viz.* Certainty of Knowledge, and thoſe lower Proofs and Appearances of Probability, which you would call Certainty of Faith; and if you do not here make this Diſtinction, by the Certainty of Knowledge and Faith, you muſt mean only the Certainty of Faith and Faith, or the firm Belief of indubitable Perſwaſion and indubitable Perſwaſion. The plain Deſign of this Paſſage is, to lead the Reader into an Opinion, that there are ſome Perſons, who are arrived to ſuch a Certainty of Knowledge and Faith in the moſt involved and perplex'd Points relating to the Trinity, as to juſtify them in declaring others who are not of their Mind to be under a damnable Error, and out of the Chriſtian Way of Salvation. I have not met with one ſingle Perſon, of what Perſwaſion ſoever, but has thus underſtood it: And if this is not the plain Import and Intent, not only of this Paſſage, but this whole *Introduction*, I might defy any Man living to put any Senſe or Meaning at all to it.

It is eaſy to gueſs who the Perſons are that have here advanced themſelves as the ſole rightful indubitable Guides of implicit Believers; but if I ſhould aſk you in good earneſt, who and where thoſe Perſons are, who, upon this Certainty of Knowledge and Faith, are juſtifiable in affixing the Sanctions of eternal Life and Death to the moſt doubtful and difficult Points, in which Men of the greateſt Capacity and Integrity could never agree,

you

you could only ſay, that they are thoſe who are in the right; and ſince you have no other Mark to diſtinguiſh them by, but their own indubitable Perſwaſion, they muſt in your Scheme be all thoſe who are indubitably perſwaded that they are in the right, in any Matter which they think of great Importance: that is, all the warm poſitive Zealots in the whole Chriſtian World, of what Opinion, Party, or Perſwaſion ſoever.

Thus it is when Men, not content with the plain expreſs Declarations of the Word of God, concerning what is or is not neceſſary to Salvation, go about to eſtabliſh their own Opinions and Conceits upon very obſcure Texts, or remote Conſequences, and thereby make every thing neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, which they find moſt agreeable to their Prejudices, Paſſions, or Intereſts, or think moſt proper to be made the Mark and *Shibboleth* of a Party. But becauſe the Writer of the *Reflections* lays me under an Imputation, as having impeached you for Uncharitableneſs without ſufficient Grounds, I ſhall conſider this Matter a little farther. How well you may be able to clear your ſelves in this Point, when you ſhall condeſcend effectually to ſet about it, I cannot ſay; but I believe moſt People muſt think your Second a little unlucky in the Paſſage he has quoted from you, to vindicate your Charity.

The Paſſage he is pleaſed to quote, is in your *Introduction*, p. 10. "If indeed this "zealous Friend of mine ſhould make uſe of "carnal Weapons to conquer my Unbelief, "I ſhall ſoon diſcern that, whether I be in "the

" the right or in the wrong, he has mista-
" ken the Nature of the Caſe, and acted
" without Authority from God; nay, if he
" ſhould paſs a Sentence of Condemnation
" upon me, I ſhall have Reaſon to conclude
" he has tranſgreſſed the Bounds of his Com-
" miſſion; ſince nothing is more certain, than
" that every Man's Judgment is from the
" Lord, and to his own Maſter he muſt ſtand
" or fall; and how far, and in what Caſes, *the*
" *infinite Mercy* of God may interpoſe, and
" prevent thoſe *pernicious Effects* which ſuch
" *an Error deſerves*, and would naturally pro-
" duce if left to it ſelf, *are Secrets only known*
" *to God the Judge of all*, who is the wiſe and
" ſovereign Diſpoſer of his own Grace; but
" ſtill the *Moral Nature and Demerit* of ſuch
" an Error remains to be what it was." Either this Caſe of *damnable Error*, and of Men being in a State of Damnation from the *Moral Nature and Demerit* of the Doctrines they maintain, was intended by you to be apply'd to your Brethren, as differing from you in the diſputable Point relating to the Trinity, or it was not. If it was not, your placing it here, and ſeeming to apply it as you do, is ſuch a Piece of Injuſtice as I care not to name; ſince it could ſerve only to betray the believing Reader into an Opinion, that thoſe you plainly aim at, are guilty of that damnable Error, which yet you do not ſuppoſe them to be guilty of, and dared not directly to charge them with. But if you intended, as I think it is moſt evident you did, to apply the Caſe to your Brethren, as differing, or ſuppoſed to differ, from you in the preſent diſputable Points con-

concerning the Trinity, I fear you are in this Place invading the Prerogative of Almighty God; applying the Sanctions of eternal Life and Death to wrong Purpoſes, without the leaſt Authority from your great Lord and Maſter; and paſſing a Sentence of Damnation upon your innocent Brethren, as much as any anathematizing Council, or hereticating Creed-Makers, in the Chriſtian World, have ever done; and that conſequently, your unjuſt Charge upon your Brethren, as guilty of damnable Error in this Point, and your framing and applying humane Teſts, as the Engines of Bigotry and Party-Rage, to exclude Men from the Communion of Saints, and the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant, upon this Foundation, muſt in you be the ſame ſort of perſecuting Zeal, Impoſition, and unchriſtian Tyranny, which you have always blamed, and have been as forward as any to condemn in the *Papiſts* and High-church-men.

I ſuppoſe every one of you will grant me this Principle, that for Men to make new fundamental Articles of Faith, and declare any Thing as neceſſary to Salvation and Church-Communion, that Chriſt has not made ſo; and upon this Foundation, to exclude their Fellow Chriſtians from their ſpecial Fellowſhip and Communion, and from the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant, is the very Eſſence of Uncharitableneſs, Perſecution, and Church-Tyranny. Whether the coercive Power of the Magiſtrate be annex'd to this ſpiritual Tyranny or not, is a Matter of little Conſequence in the Caſe before us; ſince for a Man to be branded as an Heretick, to be marked out for Reproba-

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tion, to be debarred the Inſtitutions of the Goſpel, and deny'd the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant, purely for Conſcience ſake, and becauſe he cannot believe or declare his Belief of the Truth or Neceſſity of what the Scripture has not made ſuch, is a Treatment as much more cruel and antichriſtian than the inflicting any corporal Puniſhments, as the Intereſts of the Soul and another World are more valuable than thoſe of this preſent Life: And he who is debarr'd from the Inſtitutions of the Goſpel, deny'd the ſpecial Love and Fellowſhip of Chriſtians, and Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant, merely for not declaring his Belief of what God has either not revealed, or but darkly and obſcurely revealed, and not made neceſſary to Salvation, is as truly perſecuted, impoſed on, and ſubjected to an antichriſtian Power, as if he was fined, impriſoned, or put to Death. I thought it the more neceſſary to ſtate aright the Notion of Perſecution, Impoſition, and antichriſtian Tyranny; ſince I find Men very often ready to wipe their Lips in this Caſe, and ask what Evil have we done, only becauſe they do not, *when perhaps they cannot*, enforce their human uncertain Deciſions, and unſcriptural Teſts, with the coercive Power of the Civil Magiſtrate.

Nothing, you ſay, is more certain than this, that every Man's Judgment is from the Lord, and to his own Maſter he muſt ſtand or fall; and therefore, you do not indeed pretend to paſs any ſuch Sentence of Damnation as God himſelf may not reverſe, either by bringing the Perſon to Repentance and a Sight of his Error, or by extending Mercy to him in ſome extraordinary

traordinary Way. You have not, I muſt own, pretended to limit the ſovereign Grace and prerogative Mercy of God, or to put your Brethren and Fellow-Chriſtians into any ſuch State of Damnation, as not to leave it in the Power of God to ſave them.

How far, and in what Caſes, the *Infinite Mercy* of God may interpoſe, and prevent thoſe pernicious Effects which ſuch an *Error deſerves*, and would naturally produce if left to it ſelf, *are Secrets*, you ſay, *only known to God* the Judge of all, who is the wiſe and ſovereign Diſpoſer of his own Grace. And I beſeech you, *Gentlemen*, where are thoſe antichriſtian Synods, or hereticating Creed-Makers, that have ever pretended to reveal thoſe Secrets, or to determine any thing at all of the Matter more than you have done? All that they have done, has been only to affix the Sanctions of eternal Life and Death to their own fallible uncertain Deciſions, and mere human unſcriptural Teſts; and how little ſoever you may like ſuch Company, I doubt you will find it ſomewhat difficult to get rid of it.

If theſe Cenſures and Imputations, of damnable Error, are not deſigned againſt thoſe of your Brethren and Fellow-Chriſtians, who have different Apprehenſions from you in the diſputable Points relating to the Trinity; all that you can ſay here can be to no Purpoſe, unleſs it is to fix upon them a Charge of the moſt criminal Nature, which you do not your ſelves believe them to be guilty of: But if they are thus deſign'd, as 'tis plain they are, I fear you have drawn a Weight upon your ſelves, which you will not eaſily remove; ſince

you

you have laid your ſelves under a ſtrong Imputation, of having enforced the Belief of your own doubtful and falſe Speculations, under the Penalty of eternal Damnation; of making that to be fundamental, which Chriſt has never made ſo; and declaring a Thing to be neceſſary to Salvation, which God has no where declared to be ſo much as true.

All the Foundation you have for theſe unmerciful Cenſures, and Charges of damnable Error, againſt your Chriſtian Friends and Brethren, is, that they think the *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt* to be really diſtinct from, and ſubordinate to, the *Father*; ſince they cannot otherwiſe underſtand the Scriptures, or ſuppoſe that there is any Revelation at all from God made to the Underſtandings of Men in thoſe Matters. And this real Diſtinction, and real Subordination of the Perſons, is what you your ſelves cannot evade or deny, without confounding the Perſons, loſing the Trinity, and falling directly into *Sabellianiſm*: that is, into *Socinianiſm* on the one Hand; or, on the other Side, multiplying the neceſſary Self-Exiſtence, and making Three Gods in the higheſt Senſe of the Word, or Three abſolutely Supreme, Independent, Firſt Cauſes of all Things. I hope therefore, you will forbear your Cenſures for the future, and be more charitable towards your Brethren and Fellow-Chriſtians, 'till you can ſhew that your Orthodoxy muſt not terminate in *Socinianiſm* on the one Hand, or *Tritheiſm* on the other; and when you have done this, I dare engage to reconcile to you all the reputed *Arians* in the Kingdom.

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The main Poſition, upon which you have laid the mighty Streſs, and which has been made the great Engine of our late Diviſions, ought never to be forgotten; and I thank the Author of theſe *Reflections*, for giving me this Opportunity to remind you a little farther of it. Your peculiar Teſt then againſt Hereticks is this; that the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghoſt*, and not either of theſe alone, is the One True God, or the One Supreme Being. Now if this be ſo, that the Three Perſons conjunctly, and neither of the Three alone, are the One True God; then you muſt ſay, either that the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is not the One True God, or elſe that Jeſus Chriſt is his own God and Father. I leave it to your Choice which you will take; but both of them, I think, you cannot avoid. You endeavour to ſhew, that the Nature and Definition, the Eſſence, and all the eſſential Attributes of the One True God, belong equally to each Perſon diſtinctly; that is, that whether you uſe the Words *Father*, *Son*, *Holy Ghoſt*, or One True God, your Ideas are reſpectively and preciſely the ſame. And nothing can be more egregiouſly trifling, than to ſay, that to the Idea of the Father, we muſt add the Idea of the Son, and the Idea of the Holy Ghoſt, to compleat the Idea of the One True God; when it does not appear from any thing you have ſaid, that you have any diſtinct and different Ideas at all, when you pronounce thoſe diſtinct and different Sounds. If you have any different or diſtinct Ideas in your Minds, when you pronounce thoſe different Sounds, *Father*, *Son*, *Holy Ghoſt*, One True God,

you

you may, and let me add, you ought in Honour and Juſtice to let us know what thoſe different Ideas are; but if you have no ſuch, all that you ſay is only this, that the One True God, the One True God, and the One True God, and not either of Theſe alone, are the One True God; or, which amounts to the ſame thing, that the One True God, the One True God, and the One True God, is, and is not, the One True God.

If you can ſhew that you have any different and diſtinct Meaning to the ſeveral Terms you make uſe of, I hope you will think your ſelves obliged to do it; if you cannot, the Propoſition, as I have put it, muſt be your own. I am ſorry you ſhould endeavour to impeach your Brethren as Hereticks, and diſtract the Minds of the Chriſtian People, only on the Account of one mere Verbal Propoſition, which you your ſelves underſtand, either in no Senſe at all, or, which is equally unhappy for you, in a Senſe you dare not own.

But having been *called up*, as you ſay, after an extraordinary Manner to defend the Truth, you thought fit to ariſe in great Fury, and to ſtate, or rather involve the Point in one impenetrable Piece of Darkneſs; and then calmly to ſit down, and declare you intend to explain your ſelves no farther. I muſt not eaſe you of this Trouble, till I have adjuſted one Account more, which ſtill remains betwixt me and the Author of theſe *Reflections*, with regard to three Self-Contradictions he has charged upon me.

The firſt Contradiction he charges me with, is, my having ſuppoſed the Poſſibility of Communicating all the Infinite Divine Attributes

and Perfections, by an eternal Act of Generation, from God the Father to God the Son; and yet my affirming it to be impoſſible and contradictory, to ſuppoſe that any Infinite Divine Perfection ſhould be communicated to Man, or any mere Creature whatever: But theſe two are ſo perfectly reconcileable and conſiſtent, that I muſt beg his farther Help before I can ſee any thing of a Contradiction betwixt them.

2. He ſays, that the Neceſſity of being actually in the right, is what I have both aſſerted and deny'd; and 'tis true that I have ſo in different Caſes, and under different Relations and Qualifications of the Objects; and thoſe different Reſpects and Qualifications of Truths and Objects, which I referr'd to, muſt have been viſible to every Body but this Author. He could not imagine, that I ſuppoſed it not neceſſary to be in the right, where the Truth is ſo evident in it ſelf, or ſo clearly and expreſly revealed, as to have a neceſſary inſeparable Connexion with Sincerity, ſo as that a ſincere Enquirer cannot miſs it: But I ſuppoſe it not neceſſary to be in the right, where it is impoſſible to be ſo, or where after the moſt ſincere Enquiry the Perſon may be miſtaken, and not be able to diſcover the Truth. And 'tis the Neceſſity of being actually in the right in theſe doubtful and diſputable Caſes, that has troubled the World ſo much, and the Bigots of all Parties ſo ſtrenuouſly inſiſt upon.

3. Certainty in Matters of Faith is what he charges upon me, as having both aſſerted and deny'd: Deny'd, where I ſay that they muſt

must be very weak Proteſtants, if there be any ſuch, who talk of Certainty in Matters of Faith; and aſſerted, as he would have it, where I ſay, that doubtleſs, or as he explains it for me with an *i. e.* certainly, the Apoſtles were Infallible in whatever they delivered as the Mind and Will of God, *&c.* But why muſt Doubtleſs be ſtrictly the ſame with Certainly? Tho' this Author is certain of every Thing he does not doubt of, I do not pretend to it. I do not doubt but he had ſome Deſign or other in making ſuch Objections, tho' I am not certain of it. I am not ſtrictly and properly, *i. e.* infallibly certain that there were ever any ſuch Men as the Apoſtles, tho' I believe it upon ſufficient Evidence. I have never, that I know of, confounded a bare Belief or Perſwaſion with Knowledge or Certainty, and why ſhould this Gentleman charge his own Abſurdities upon me?

And now, after all, if Mr. *Fancourt* has not been able to fix any Self-Contradiction upon me, it is plainly none of his Fault, ſince he has not ſpared his kind Endeavours: He has put on his Armour, enter'd the Liſts, and bid Defiance like a Champion; and if he has not anſwered the Expectations of the Publick, or in any meaſure executed his Threatnings, he has however done his beſt, and you are to take his Endeavours in good part.

But, if Mr. *Fancourt* ſhould be prevail'd upon to publiſh the Second Part, which he has promiſed under the Title of *An Eſſay concerning Implicit Faith*; I would adviſe him, for his own ſake, to ſpare his Raillery, and keep cloſe to the Argument.

Upon the whole, I cannot help believing that you have acted an Impoſing Part in this Affair, and carried your Exhortations beyond the Bounds of Chriſtian Charity; that you have ſubſtituted your own Uncertain Deciſions, and Incomprehenſible Speculations, in the Place of Scripture; and enforced them with thoſe Spiritual and Divine Sanctions, which can belong only to the Laws of Chriſt in their Original Plainneſs and Simplicity; and that by ſetting up Humane Teſts, as the Standards of Divine Faith, and endeavouring to work upon the Judgments and Paſſions of the People, by thoſe Engines of Bigotry and Darkneſs, you have, however undeſignedly, contributed not a little to bring the Scriptures into Diſuſe and Contempt; as if they were not in themſelves ſufficiently expreſs and clear, and conſequently, no ſufficient Rule of Faith, even in Things neceſſary: And hereby you have, I fear, conſiderably wounded and weakened that truly Catholick and Chriſtian Charity, that juſt and equitable Liberty of Conſcience, and that ſtrict Regard to the Authority of God alone, which are the Life and Glory of Chriſtianity. 'Tis true, you drop here and there a Paſſage, as diſclaming all external compulſive Force in Matters of Religion; and tho' I do not pretend to enter into your Hearts, or to ſay how far a Change of Circumſtances might alter your Sentiments in this Particular, yet I cannot but think, that ſince you have diſcovered in all other Reſpects the true Spirit of Perſecution, Impoſition, and Church Tyranny, that Man muſt have a ſtrong Faith, or a weak Underſtanding, who ſhould truſt to your Clemency,

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had you that Legal Force in your Hands, which you now diſclaim while 'tis out of your Power. Whoever obſerves your Manner of diſcanting, with regard to Mr. *Emlyn's* Caſe in *Ireland*, will not I believe entertain any great Opinion of your intire Averſion to all compulſive Force in theſe Matters; and your attributing the viſible Succeſs of that *Secret Treachery*, join'd with *open Violence and Compulſion, to the Bleſſing of God attending the Labours of a Reverend Brother*, is ſuch a ſolemn Piece of Mockery, as one can hardly be ſerious upon, and which yet ought not to be laughed at.

After all: If you will, from any juſt and clear Reaſonings, make it appear that I have miſtaken the Point; that your Zeal in this Caſe is according to Knowledge; and that you have inſiſted upon nothing as neceſſary, but what Chriſt has plainly made ſo in the Conſtitution of his Goſpel; I promiſe to retract all that I have ſaid upon this Score: and ſhall be ſo far from thinking it a Diſgrace, that I ſhall rejoice in a clearer Light, and be glad of any Opportunity to ſhew how readily I can ſacrifice what is commonly thought a Point of Reputation, to the ſuperior Intereſt of Truth, whenever it ſhall be propoſed with ſufficient Evidence to my Underſtanding.

I am, Gentlemen, *&c.*

A

DEFENCE

Of the Two Foregoing

LETTERS

TO

Mr. TONG, *Mr.* ROBINSON, *Mr.* SMITH, *and Mr.* REYNOLDS.

AGAINST

Mr. *FANCOURT's Enthuſiaſm Retorted.*

A

DEFENCE

Of the Two Foregoing

LETTERS

TO

Mr. TONG, Mr. ROBINSON, Mr. SMITH, and Mr. REYNOLDS.

AGAINST

Mr. FRANCOUR'S

Entire Facts Refuted.



A DEFENCE

Of the Two Foregoing LETTERS.

THE Reverend Mr. *Samuel Fancourt*, after three Years Silence in the Controverſy betwixt him and me, relating to the *Four London Miniſters*, has now at length, I ſuppoſe, convinced the World, that while he ſaid nothing, he did not ſpare Thinking. I ſhall not anticipate the Reader's Judgment in the Matter; but proceed directly, as briefly and clearly as I can, to ſettle the remaining Part of the Account between Mr. *Fancourt* and my ſelf, as it depends entirely upon the declared Principles, and well-known Conduct, of theſe *Four Miniſters*.

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After ſome very Great and Learned Divines of the *Church of England* had ventured to recede from the common *Doctrine*, or rather *common Sett of Words*, which Men had been ſuppoſed to agree in with reſpect to the *Holy Trinity*; theſe Gentlemen thought fit to interpoſe, in order to reſcue the People of *their Denomination*, their *old Friends* and *Acquaintance*, from an Error which they apprehended of fatal Conſequence; and this at a Time when no Diſſenting Miniſter of any one Congregation in *England*, that I know of, had declared himſelf againſt their common *Verbal Belief*. The Controverſy then lay wholly in the Eſtabliſhed Church; and there only it might have been thoroughly and finally debated, without the leaſt Trouble or Moleſtation to the Diſſenters, if theſe Miniſters could have vouchſafed us that Favour; but this they could not, it ſeems, in Point of Conſcience grant us: and therefore, like true Guardians of the *Faith once delivered to the Saints*, they publiſh a Book, conſiſting for the moſt Part of a Collection of *human Creeds*, and a few Quotations out of Scripture, without taking the leaſt Notice of what had been ſo often urged againſt the Senſe they would ſeem to underſtand them in. In this Book, they lay down what they take to be of the laſt Conſequence concerning the *Trinity*; and inſiſt upon it as ſuch in Point of Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, without rendring it either intelligible in it ſelf, or ſhewing how it can poſſibly conſiſt with the Truth of the Chriſtian Revelation.

I, who had hitherto been a ſilent and peaceable Spectator only of what had been ſaid and done

done in the World, thought my ſelf now oblig'd to expoſe the Weakneſs and Abſurdity of ſuch a Conduct, with the fatal and miſchievous Conſequences of the Principle they had advanced. In the mean while, I did not pretend to determine any thing concerning the Perſons themſelves, with reſpect to the Vincibility or Invincibility of their Error, or how far they might be innocent or guilty, clear'd or condemn'd, *in Foro Conſcientiæ*. I look'd upon this as a Point uncapable of an human Deciſion, and ſuch as muſt be left to the final Determination of *Chriſt* himſelf. But Mr. *Fancourt* would repreſent me, as chargeing the Brethren with great Impiety and moral Wickedneſs, as if I had imputed all the fatal Conſequences, and the whole Guilt and Condemnation of their falſe Principles, to the Perſons themſelves; than which he could have deviſed nothing more groundleſs, nor more unrighteous: and yet his Declamations and Outcries about this, make up a very conſiderable Part of his Book.

To condemn Mens Perſons, together with their Principles, has been ever the Manner of blind Bigots, and flaming Zealots; though nothing can be more contrary to the Nature, Spirit and Genius of Chriſtianity. When Men are imperious and impatient of Contradiction, they will reckon themſelves decry'd, if they are not ador'd; and he who preſumes to differ from them, or to queſtion any of their Deciſions, immediately becomes their Executioner: But if Mr. *Fancourt*, and thoſe of his Way, cannot differ from other Chriſtians in Matters of dark and doubtful Speculation

culation and Belief, without charging their Adverſaries with Inſincerity and moral Wickedneſs; I am heartily ſorry for them, and can only wiſh them leſs Infallibility, and more Charity. However, I hope the impartial World will obſerve and conſider it, if Mr. *Fancourt* will not, that 'tis not Men, but Doctrines, not Perſons, but Principles, that I am concern'd with, and arguing againſt.

The main Principle which the *Four Miniſters* have advanced as the very Subſtance of the *Trinitarian* Doctrine, and the Centre of Chriſtian Unity, Peace, and Communion, is this; That *theſe Three*, the *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*, and not any *One of theſe*, is the *One True God*.

Now, in the *Letter of Enthuſiaſm*, and the *Defence* of it, directed to the *Four Miniſters*, I have endeavoured at leaſt to ſhew, that this main Propoſition, which they lay down as a Fundamental Article of Faith, is perfectly unintelligible; that if they do not underſtand the Word *God*, in a different Senſe, as apply'd to the *Three Perſons* ſeparately, and conjunctly conſidered, theſe Words have no Meaning at all; that their main Principle is utterly inconſiſtent with all the human *Creeds* and *Teſts* of *Orthodoxy* they have produced, and cannot poſſibly be reconciled even to their own Scripture Account of the Matter. I urg'd them farther with the fatal and miſchievous Conſequences of ſetting up this abſurd unintelligible Principle, as a Fundamental Article of Faith, as neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, while the Scripture is abſolutely ſilent about it, and they had not

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ſo much as attempted to produce any Scripture Evidence for any ſuch *Neceſſity*. So that had their Account of the Matter been intelligible, conſiſtent, or even true, as it appears to be neither; yet ſtill their pretended *Neceſſity* of it, and the Streſs they lay upon it, muſt be altogether groundleſs, and of fatal Conſequence, as deſtructive of Chriſtian Peace and Charity, and directly tending to ſubject and enſlave the Underſtandings and Conſciences of Men to an human Juriſdiction.

My Endeavours to prove all this, have lain before the World a conſiderable Time, and make up by far the greater Part of the Two *Letters* which Mr. *Fancourt* has undertaken to animadvert upon. But this Writer, who can defend his Brethren without Argument, and clear up all Difficulties without taking the leaſt Notice of them, tells the World roundly, that I had brought this Charge without any Evidence to ſupport it; nay, againſt the cleareſt Evidence to the contrary; when he ſays, that I had charged theſe Conſequences upon them without Proof: It will not be worth my while to confute him here, by quoting Three Parts in Four of the Two *Letters* againſt him; and therefore, I am content that what I have offer'd in Support of the Charge, ſhould ſtand as it is, and ſpeak for it ſelf, till Mr. *Fancourt* can find ſomething or other in Anſwer to it.

But what is this clear Evidence to the contrary? How does it appear, that the Conſequences which I have charg'd upon theſe Gentlemens Principles and Conduct, are weak and ill-grounded? Why, to prove this, he quotes

quotes certain Paſſages from the *Four Miniſters*, in which they allow the Sufficiency of Scripture as a Rule of Faith, and declare for the Liberty and Right of private Judgment. But it falls out here very unluckily for Mr. *Fancourt*, that the Queſtion is not, What theſe Gentlemen profeſs or declare; but what the Conſequences of their Principles are, and what the Effects of their Conduct muſt be while they act upon theſe Principles. If I had charg'd them with profeſſedly throwing off the Authority of Scripture, and ſetting up an human Juriſdiction in its Stead, or with denying directly, and in Terms, the Right of private Judgment, and declaring themſelves the only rightful, authoritative Interpreters of Scripture; in this Caſe, I ſay, their Profeſſion and expreſs Declaration to the contrary, had been a ſufficient Evidence: But ſince theſe are only Conſequences which I had charg'd upon their Principles, and, as I think, effectually ſupported; Mr. *Fancourt* muſt, I preſume, be ſuppos'd to allow the Charge, as I had laid it, whilſt he does not think fit to offer any thing to the contrary.

Had this Writer been as able to defend his Brethren, as he was willing, he would have endeavour'd to ſhew, that the Principles which I had attack'd were ſound and good, and that my Arguments were inconſequent and of no Force; that his Brethren, the *Four Miniſters*, had advanced nothing as a neceſſary Article of Faith, but what the Holy Scriptures declared as ſuch; that their Terms of Peace and Unity, are the very ſame with thoſe inſiſted on by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles; and that they

they have not endeavoured to exclude Men from Church Communion, and the Benefits of the Christian Covenant, for Want of any other Qualification, but that Faith and Repentance which the Gospel requires as necessary to Salvation; in short, that their Principles are truly Christian and Catholick, and such as have no Tendency to Imposition, Persecution, Party Rage, or Church Tyranny. This, doubtless, he would have endeavour'd to prove, in Opposition to what I had offered to the contrary, if he had thought himself capable of it; for no Body I imagine can think that he wanted an Inclination. And therefore, as his Brethren will thank him perhaps for his Good-will; so I have no Reason to be angry with him, for the Shrewdness of his Arguments.

I had urg'd upon the *Four Ministers*, their setting up for strict and proper, *i. e. infallible Certainty*; and this in a Matter which the whole impartial World must allow to be very difficult and doubtful, at least; and I made it appear, that if by *Knowledge* and *Certainty*, as they use and apply the Words, they intended only *Belief* or *Persuasion*, as the Words were sometimes used in a popular Way of Speaking, this must render the whole Passage unintelligible, trifling, and perfectly ridiculous. To this Mr. *Fancourt* makes no Reply; but continues to tell us over and over, what his Brethren meant. Let their Meaning therefore be as he says, if he pleases; I left it to their Choice at first, whether they would here take the Charge of *Presumption* or *trifling Impertinence*. And since he here seems to accept the latter for them, if they will confirm his Choice, I shall be easy.

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That Knowledge and Certainty is frequently, in a popular Way of Speaking, uſed for Belief or Perſwaſion, every Body will allow; nor does this deſerve to be minded or regarded, where nothing depends upon it, and where it does not give any different Turn to, or at all alter the Senſe and Deſign of the Diſcourſe. Now, becauſe I would not give this teſty Gentleman any needleſs Trouble, whenever I happen in the ſame Way of Speaking, to uſe the Words *certainly*, *doubtleſs*, &c. for the higheſt Degrees of Probability only, or in Caſes which no Body can well doubt of, tho' there is not perhaps ſtrict and abſolute Certainty, he may ſubſtitute, if he pleaſes, any other Words, as, I *think*, I *gueſs*, &c. in the Place of the former. If this pleaſe him better, it will ſerve my Turn as well, and leave every Argument and Expreſſion of mine in its full Force and proper Significancy. Let this be done in the Paſſage relating to the *Four Miniſters*, and I deſire no more; but am content after ſuch a Subſtitution, to leave every Body to judge of the Intelligibleneſs, Conſiſtency, or Pertinence of the Diſcourſe, as they ſhall find Occaſion. And yet, whenever Mr. *Fancourt* finds me in any little incidental Expreſſion uſing the Words *certainly*, *doubtleſs*, &c. where there is not ſtrict and proper Certainty, he triumphantly repreſents it as a parallel Caſe with that of the *Four Miniſters*, and gravely returns it upon me, under the Name and Notion of *Enthuſiaſm retorted*. But I think an Adverſary muſt be hard put to it indeed, when he is driven to ſuch poor Shifts as this.

In

In the *Defence of the Letter of Enthuſiaſm*, I obſerv'd that Mr. *Fancourt* had committed a moſt groſs and notorious Blunder about *ſubjective Certainty*, as having defin'd it by *indubitable Perſuaſion*; from whence it muſt follow, that every Man is equally *certain*, where his Perſuaſion is equally *ſtrong* and *indubitable*; and conſequently, that there may be *Certainty*, the higheſt and moſt *indubitable Certainty*, where there is not the leaſt Truth, Conſiſtency, or common Senſe. To this he has nothing to ſay, but only, that he ſuppoſes his *own Perſuaſion* to be a *rational Perſuaſion*. And muſt not every one elſe ſuppoſe the ſame; or is it poſſible any Man ſhould believe or be perſuaded of any Thing at all, without ſuppoſing that he has ſufficient Reaſon for it? The Queſtion here is not, What Mr. *Fancourt* ſuppoſes of his own Perſuaſion; but wherein *ſubjective Certainty* conſiſts, and what is the proper Nature and Definition of the Thing. And here our Author having been clearly convicted of ingenuouſly owning it, or giving up the Point as indefenſible, endeavours to ſhuffle it over, and ſeems reſolved to ſtand to it in ſpite of Reaſon or common Senſe.

He proceeds to exerciſe his Talent in chiding me for what I had ſaid concerning the Nature and Ground of *Faith*; and he is ſo angry at the Account I had given of *Implicit Faith*, that he has quite loſt his Wits upon the Subject, and no Man could have expoſed an Adverſary more than he has here expoſed himſelf.

I had maintained that *Faith*, *Belief*, or the rational Aſſent of the Mind, could in no Caſe go beyond the *Perception* of the *Underſtanding*;

and that to believe a Thing, without knowing what we believe, or without having any certain fixed Ideas to the Terms of the Propoſition aſſented to, muſt be impoſſible and contradictory. Now this plainly affected thoſe, who ſet up for the Belief of what they cannot explain or render intelligible; and who, after they have been ſo often and ſo cloſely preſs'd to it, are not able to affix any determinate Idea to their own Words. But here, upon my acknowledging a moſt certain and demonſtrable Principle of *Science*, namely, that there are infinite Things in Nature which we cannot underſtand; or that our Capacities are not infinite, and therefore cannot take in all the infinite Truths concerning *God*, and the Nature of Things; our Author, *p.* 31. thus exclaims: "What, "can't Mr. *Morgan* believe that to be, which "yet he acknowledges to be! What a myſteri-"ous Art is here! to be able readily to aſſent "unto that, which is neither the Object of his "Knowledge, nor yet of his Faith! This I "muſt own, to borrow a Pun from our witty "Author, is *a ſound Foundation for implicit Faith, "which can be built upon nothing but Sounds.* Me-"thinks he ſhould not willingly contend for "nought, if he knew it to be nothing he con-"tended for; unleſs, (which yet I cannot "ſuppoſe) he fights [for Bread or] only to "keep himſelf in Breath. For my Part, I "cannot perceive in what he differs from theſe "Gentlemen in the Point before us, abating "the *Self-Contradiction*, which he muſt take "as his *own Particular*".

I have quoted this as a Sample of Mr. *Fauconet*'s Method of *retorting Enthuſiaſm*, this being

ing perhaps as remarkable and material an Inſtance of it as any in the whole Book. Our Author may rejoice and triumph as he pleaſes in his own Weakneſs and Inſolence; but for my Part, I cannot but pity the Man, and am in ſome Pain for him, whilſt I am obliged to call him to ſo publick an Account for ſuch Stuff as this.

That there are infinite Things in Nature which we cannot underſtand, and which are wholly incomprehenſible and above our Reaſon, *i. e.* that the human Underſtanding is finite and limited, and no ways adequate to an infinite Object, is as certainly and infallibly true, and as much an Object of Knowledge or Matter of Science, as the Being of a *God*, our own Exiſtence, or any Scientifick Principle in the World. We *certainly know*, as well as *believe*, that our *Knowledge is not infinite*: And yet this it ſeems is *ſomething unknown*; and Mr. *Fancourt* pretends, that by granting this, I muſt maintain that I aſſent to what I can neither *know* nor *believe*. But I can neither know nor believe that our Author is here in good earneſt, becauſe I can neither know nor believe that he has quite loſt his Wits; and yet I verily believe that he would talk more to the Purpoſe if his Cauſe could bear him out in it. But after all, I fear our Author will never be able to bring an Inſtance of his believing any thing that he does not underſtand; and 'till he can inform me better, I muſt ſtill imagine, that to believe we know not what, is really to believe nothing at all. This is not properly to *believe*, but to *triſle* and *wander in the Dark*; to loſe ones *Senſes*, and to uſe *Words* without *Ideas*. But that *I may no longer amuſe the World with my impene-*

trable Darkneſs, our Author, *p.* 32. undertakes to ſet the Matter in a *clearer Light*; in order to which *Clearing*, he makes Choice of this Propoſition, *Jeſus is Emanuel.* I ſhall take no Notice of his mere Trifling about it, ſince that could ſerve only to expoſe him; but when he has *prepared* the Way by *pure Impertinence*, what he brings it to at length is this, that where in any Propoſition we underſtand the *Terms*, and their *Connexion*, ſo as to join or ſeparate the Ideas in our *own Minds*, as they are affirmed or deny'd one of another in the *Propoſition it ſelf*, this is *explicit Faith*, or the Aſſent of the Mind to that particular Propoſition. But then he pretends, that a Man may aſſent to, or believe, a particular Propoſition, tho' he has no Ideas of, or underſtands not, the Meaning of the Terms; and that he may *believe* for Inſtance, or aſſent to this particular Propoſition, *Jeſus is Emanuel*, without knowing what is meant by *Jeſus*, or what by *Emanuel.* This, which he calls *Implicit Faith*, is as he declares what he and *Four Miniſters* maintain, in Oppoſition to thoſe who ſay we can *believe* no farther than we *underſtand*, and if we *underſtand* but a Part of a Propoſition we can *believe* but a Part, even that Part which we underſtand.

Here then the Matter will ſoon be brought to an Iſſue, for I own the Queſtion to be as he has repreſented it; and yet I ſtill aſſert it to be as impoſſible to aſſent to one particular Propoſition without underſtanding the Terms, as it is to ſee without Light, or viſible Objects. *Faith*, *Belief* or *Aſſent*, being nothing elſe but the joining or ſeparating of Ideas in the Mind, juſt as they are affirmed, or deny'd of each other

ther in the particular Propoſition aſſented to; 'tis plainly impoſſible thus to join or ſeparate in our Minds the Ideas of a Propoſition, whoſe Terms are to us perfectly inſignificant, and of which we have really to Ideas at all. This is evident to a Demonſtration; but Mr. *Fancourt* thinks he has overthrown it, by obſerving, that tho' we know not for Inſtance what is meant by *Jeſus*, or what by *Emanuel*, yet we may believe in general, upon a ſuperadded ſufficient Teſtimony, that this Propoſition, *Jeſus is Emanuel*, contains ſome certain Truth in it. But here it muſt I ſuppoſe be evident, that he ſubſtitutes *one Propoſition* for *another*, *a general* for a particular *one*; and then pretends that the Belief of a *general Propoſition* of which he *has Ideas*, is the Belief of the *particular Propoſition* of which he has *no Ideas*. The Propoſition which he pretends to believe, without knowing what he believes, or which he *believes without believing*, is this, *Jeſus is Emanuel*; but the Propoſition which he really and explicitly believes is this, that the *former Propoſition* falls under the general Claſs of *unknown Truths*. He who really and explicitly believes or aſſents to this particular Propoſition, *Jeſus is Emanuel*, muſt in his own Mind join or connect the Idea of *Jeſus* with the Idea of *Emanuel*; which he cannot poſſibly do, if he has no ſuch Ideas: But he who believes or aſſents to the other general Propoſition, only joins or connects the general Abſtract Idea of a *Propoſition* with the general Abſtract Idea of *Truth*.

And here, if Mr. *Fancourt* cannot ſee that theſe are two quite different Connexions, and relate to two perfectly diſtinct and different

Propoſitions, I doubt it would be to no great Purpoſe for me to take much Pains to inform him better. And now we have all our Author's Clearings and Elucidations upon this Subject, I think 'tis evident that, in his way of Talking, we may as truly and properly be ſaid to *know* and *underſtand* what cannot be *known* or *underſtood*, as to *believe* or *aſſent* to what we cannot underſtand. In Oppoſition to which, I have endeavoured farther to confirm the Truth of this Principle, that the *rational Belief or Aſſent of the Mind* can in no Caſe be carried beyond the *Perception* of the *Underſtanding*.

I ſhall not now ſtay to expoſe the Weakneſs and Impertinence of all Mr. *Fancourt*'s inſignificant *Gleanings*, and his many dull inſipid Abuſes hereupon. I can eaſily forgive his Heat and Reſentment upon this Occaſion; ſince perhaps it may ariſe from his great Affection, and many Obligations to his Friends and Benefactors, as he has given the World to underſtand already. However, I would adviſe him, when he ſhews himſelf in Publick again, to leave his Paſſions at Home, and bring his Underſtanding along with him.

Perhaps it may be expected, that I ſhould here take ſome Notice of Mr. *Fancourt*'s Objections againſt what I had offered in a Letter to Mr. *Cumming* concerning Conſequences, or the Abſurdity of that common Pretence, of carrying the Principles and Doctrines of *pure Revelation* beyond the original expreſs Senſe. Now, tho' I ſtand accountable for this to an abler Pen, and ſhould be glad to ſee Mr. *Cumming*'s own Defence; yet ſince our Author muſt be meddling where he had no Buſineſs, I

ſhall

ſhall endeavour to let him ſee what he has got by it.

When I advanced that Principle againſt Mr. *Cumming*, I aſſign'd Reaſons for it from the different Nature of *neceſſary* and *contingent Truths*, or from that well known Diſtinction between *Matters of Science* and *Matters of Fact*. I obſerved, that all neceſſary Scientifick Truths, having an immutable eternal Relation to, and Dependance on each other, might therefore be inferred or deduced from one another in a Train of rational Conſequences; whereas all *contingent Truths*, or *Facts*, as all Matters of *mere Revelation* are with reſpect to us, ſince they are independent on each other, and have no neceſſary Connexion with the Principles of Reaſon and Science properly ſo call'd, and ſince they depend abſolutely on Teſtimony, cannot poſſibly be carry'd beyond the original expreſs Declaration of the Teſtifier or Revealer himſelf. But this Reaſon, which is perhaps demonſtrative, our prudent Author takes no Notice of, and does not it ſeems think himſelf concerned with. He ſaw perhaps very well, that he could not pretend to anſwer what I had offered; and therefore, inſtead of this he deviſes two other Reaſons for me, which never enter'd into my Head, which could not poſſibly be any Reaſons at all, and in which he trifles, preſumes, and dogmatizes, beyond Example. And here, as a Specimen of our Author's Civility and good Senſe, I ſhall quote what he has thought fit to offer upon this Head, *p.* 38. where, ſpeaking of his implicit contradictory *Faith*, which we have already conſidered, he ſays, "And by this Time you muſt obſerve, that if

" it be indeed a blind *Faith*, a mere *mechanical* " *Impulſe*, *Enthuſiaſm*, or a *ſtrong Perſuaſion* with- " out any *rational Grounds*, as he in his great " *Modeſty* and *Civility* is pleas'd to call it; Mr. " *Morgan*'s own Faith is every jot as blind, " mechanical, and enthuſiaſtick, as his Neigh- " bours: Nay, more ſo; if what he affirms " be true, *that independent Facts are uncapable of* " *yielding Conſequences; and that this Act of the* " *Mind in drawing rational Inferences and Deduc-* " *tions, muſt be confin'd to Principles of Reaſon and* " *Science, diſtinct from Matters of Fact and Teſti-* " *mony.* For if it be impoſſible in the Nature " of the Thing, to carry any Matter of pure " Revelation, beyond the expreſs Senſe and " Import of the Revelation it ſelf, as abſtract- " ed from all really diſtinct Conſequences " whatever; (which is his Opinion;) it muſt " be (I preſume) for one of theſe two Rea- " ſons: Either, firſt, becauſe the expreſs Senſe " of a Matter of pure Revelation is impoſſible " to be known; for if the Senſe of Revelation " may be known, why mayn't ſuch Deduc- " ons as repreſent by Parts what the Whole " contains, be drawn from it? And are the " Inferences that the Principles of Reaſon af- " ford any more? But if the expreſs Import " it ſelf of a Divine Revelation is not to be " underſtood, what does this Writer of *eter-* " *nal Contradictions* mean, when he ſays, *That* " *Things which depend wholly upon Revelation, muſt* " *by the Revelation it ſelf be brought down to our* " *Underſtandings and Capacities, ſo as to form ſome* " *clear, conſiſtent Notions and Conceptions of them?* " Or elſe, Secondly, becauſe the Truth of " ſuch a Senſe is impoſſible to be proved;

" Which

" Which muſt leave therefore the Truth of all " thoſe Conſequences which depend thereon, " doubtful and uncertain; there being in his " Caſe no rational Foundation to believe either " the Propoſitions themſelves, or any Truths " that he compriz'd in them. But will our " Author ſay, that the Truth of the Revelation " is doubtful, and yet that *the Apoſtles were* " *doubtleſs infallible, in whatever they delivered as* " *the Mind and Will of God?*" From what is here quoted, the Reader will perceive that our Author is moſt ridiculouſly angry, and has been frighted almoſt out of his Wits. 'Tis really a great Exerciſe of Patience to be plagued continually with ſuch *Impertinence*. But why ſhould this *Trifler* put his own *preſumptive Reaſons* upon me, againſt my *expreſs* Declarations to the contrary? And this too, when I had given him *another Reaſon*, and as I think a plain demonſtrative *Reaſon*, to which he has ſaid nothing, and which therefore, as may well be preſum'd, he could not anſwer?

But does he indeed know, that the Act of *Inference*, or *Deduction*, depends upon the *natural Relations* of Things one to another, or does he not? If he does, I would ask him how it is poſſible that contingent Truths, or Truths in Fact only, betwixt which there is no natural Connexion and Dependance, ſhould be infer'd one from another? Or how any Circumſtances of a Fact can poſſibly be known, farther than is expreſs'd and declared in the *Teſtimony itſelf*, upon which all our Knowledge in ſuch Matters muſt entirely depend?

Here he has neither attempted to anſwer the Reaſon of the Thing, nor to give any Inſtance

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in Fact to the contrary; and therefore, it may be presum'd that he does not understand the Principle. And this is what he has plainly enough discover'd in the Question he asks, *Why mayn't such Deductions, as represent by Parts what the Whole contains, be drawn from it? And are the Inferences that the Principles of Reason afford any more?* Yes certainly; the Inferences which the Principles of Reason afford, are something more than the Principle itself from which they are drawn, represented by its several Parts; for otherwise *Demonstration* would be nothing more than *Definition*, or explaining a complex Term, by enumerating the several simple Ideas of which it consists.

Can Mr. *Fancourt* imagine, that the whole System of *Geometry*, and the possible Truths of that Kind, are contain'd as Parts in this Proposition, *the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right Angles?* Or that all the Truths and Doctrines of Natural Religion are included as the several constituent Parts of this Principle, *Man is a rational free Agent, under the special Government of a Supreme Being?* And yet this must be the Case, if he understands the Matter right. But before this accurate Writer pretends to be so angry with those who will not talk in his blundering Way, he ought to acquaint himself better with the Nature of Things, and with the well-known and establish'd Signification of Words; so far at least, as not to put *Definition* for *Demonstration*, and *Description* for *Deduction*. This I think I may be accountable for, that whenever our Author shall vouchsafe to give us any particular Instances of his rational Inferences and Deductions, from Matters of Fact and

and Teſtimony itſelf, it will ſoon appear, that theſe Inferences are the very Principle either in Whole or in Part, and that his Conſequence carries him at moſt no farther, and perhaps not quite ſo far as the Principle itſelf: This, I ſay, will eaſily be made appear, or ſomething worſe, namely, that his pretended *Inference* has no Relation at all to the *Principle*, and that it is neither a *Part* of it, nor a *Conſequence* from it.

This Doctrine of Conſequences ſo nearly affects thoſe, who pretend to build their Hopes of Salvation, and the moſt neceſſary fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith upon it, that I think it may be reaſonably expected they ſhould clear this their main Principle, before they proceed too far in their excommunicating, hereticating Method. Let them prove that Things neceſſary to Salvation, and Chriſtian Catholick Communion, are left to the Inferences and Deductions of human Reaſon; and that they are not plainly expreſs'd and made characteriſtically neceſſary in the Revelation itſelf. 'Till this be done, I verily believe Mr. *Fancourt* muſt leave his *Subſcribing* Brethren but in an ill Plight, whatever elſe he might be able to ſay in their Defence.

And this brings me to the laſt Account depending between Mr. *Fancourt* and me, relating to *Sincerity*; in which he has perhaps uſed his *utmoſt Endeavours* to corrupt and pervert the well known eſtabliſh'd Signification of Words, and the plain Scope and Deſign of all that I had ſaid, in order to charge me with the moſt groundleſs and unrighteous Conſequences. To give the Reader a Sample of Mr. *Fancourt*'s *Juſtice* and *Impartiality*, while he is treating of

Sincerity,

Sincerity, I ſhall here quote the whole Paſſage out of the Letter of *Enthuſiaſm*, from whence he has torn that Scrap with which he has made ſo weak and inſignificant a Clamour. Having there call'd upon the *Four Miniſters* to give ſome Account of their Conduct, in ſetting up a Principle as a neceſſary Fundamental Article of the Chriſtian Faith, which, as I had ſhewn, could not conſiſt either with Reaſon or Scripture; I add, *p.* 35, 36. "But tho' I have ſufficient "Reaſon to conclude that you are under a Mi- "ſtake in this Matter, yet I have more Cha- "rity than to think that your Error is damna- "ble; I am perſuaded, that whatever Miſtakes "or Errors are conſiſtent with a ſincere En- "deavour to know the Will of God, and to "do it, are conſiſtent with Holineſs, and "therefore with Salvation; and that God not "only will not condemn a Man for an Error "abſolutely invincible, but will alſo, upon the "gracious Terms of his Goſpel-Covenant, by "a general Repentance, thro' the Merits of "*Chriſt*, be ready to pardon all ſuch Miſtakes "and Errors as Men may fall into, not from "any *vicious ſelfiſh Principle*, or any wilful Op- "poſition to the *Truth*, but from mere human "Frailty, or ſuch Weakneſſes and Overſights "as are common to the beſt of Men. This is "certainly moſt agreeable to the Genius and "Spirit of Chriſtianity; a Principle, every "where recommended and enforced by the "Goſpel of *Chriſt*; and without ſuch a Princi- "ple of Charity, and that Diſpoſition and "Conduct that muſt flow from it, and be in- "fluenced by it, I fear the moſt illuminated "Dogmatizer of us all would have Reaſon to

"tremble

" tremble under the Inſpection of his omni-
" ſcient Lord, and deſpair of his own Salva-
" tion. For my own Part, I ſee Reaſon every
" Day more and more to thank *God* for the
" Bleſſing of ſuch an Education, as never led
" me into theſe Principles of Bigottry and En-
" thuſiaſm; but that I can worſhip the one
" true *God*, thro' the Merits and Mediation
" of his only begotten *Son*, depending upon
" the effectual Aid and Aſſiſtance of the *Holy*
" *Spirit*, to lead me into all *Neceſſary Truth*,
" and to guide me thro' the Snares and Temp-
" tations of this World, in the Way of Peace
" and Holineſs, to the heavenly everlaſting
" Kingdom; without thinking my ſelf obliged
" to pronounce Damnation on the one Side or
" the other, where Men appear equally honeſt
" and ſincere, merely becauſe they can't agree
" about certain dark myſterious Points, which
" ſome weak Zealots may reckon of great Im-
" portance. In ſuch Caſes, it ſeldom happens
" but the confident, preſuming, dogmatical
" Side are in the wrong; and whether they
" are right or wrong with regard to their
" Notions, they are certainly wrong in their
" Conduct, when they are ſo free with their
" Anathema's and Curſes, as if *God* had en-
" truſted them with the Keys of the bottom-
" leſs Pit, and withal given them a Commiſſion
" to conſign over thoſe to everlaſting Fire,
" who in the Judgment of the whole impartial
" World muſt be look'd upon to be as intel-
" ligent, as honeſt and good Men, and as
" good Chriſtians, as themſelves. For my own
" Part, I long for that Time, which is not
" far off, when the Spirit of implicit Faith,

" and

" and blind uncharitable Zeal, ſhall be ex-
" ploded and baniſhed our Proteſtant Country;
" *and when Sincerity on the one Hand, and the abſo-*
" *lute Neceſſity of being in the right on the other,*
" *ſhall remain as the only diſtinguiſhing Principles*
" *of* Papiſts *and* Proteſtants.

Now from hence Mr. *Fancourt* concludes, that I have ſet up for Sincerity without Truth; that Sincerity, in this Account of it, may be ſeparated from *all*, even the moſt *neceſſary* and *fundamental Truth*; and that the Doctrine I here advance, is the very *Dregs of Paganiſm*, and perfectly conſiſtent with the utmoſt Degrees of diabolical Deluſion, and moral Wickedneſs.

I ſhall not here pretend to argue with ſuch an Adverſary as this, upon a Point that is too plain to be diſputed, and in which he has ſhewn himſelf uncapable of Conviction. But ſince he appeals to the *Judgment of the Impartial*, in this Caſe, I accept the Appeal; and believe I may venture to give him up the whole Cauſe, if he can find any impartial Perſon, or indeed any Man at all in his right Senſes, excepting himſelf, who is of his Mind in this Particular.

I had urg'd it upon him, that he could not make good his Conſequences, without ſuppoſing *Sincerity* to conſiſt only in a Man's acting upon his *preſent Sentiments*, whatever they are, and whether he has made any rational free Enquiry concerning it or not. To which he replies, that this is only Imagination; that I miſtake and abuſe him in ſuppoſing it; and that he did not underſtand Sincerity in any ſuch Senſe. He ought therefore to have ſhewn in what other poſſible Senſe of the Word, *Sincerity* might be ſeparated from all *Truth*, and be conſiſtent with

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the groſſeſt *Paganiſm*, and moral Wickedneſs. But 'tis enough for ſuch Writers to ſhift and evade what they cannot anſwer, and perhaps our Author reckons himſelf accountable to *God* only.

However, if one Method will not do, he is reſolved to try another; and accordingly he has two very different Weights and Meaſures, by which he examines and adjuſts my Account of Sincerity. When he puts it into one Scale, he finds it extremely wanting; there is no Truth nor Soundneſs in it; 'tis lighter than Vanity and nothing, the very Dregs of Paganiſm, the groſſeſt Diaboliſm and moral Wickedneſs: But when he applies it to the other End of the Ballance, 'tis too heavy; it outweighs all human Attainments, and amounts even to a ſuper-angelical Perfection.

Upon my ſaying, that *he who acts according to his Judgment, after he has taken all the Care he can to inform himſelf right by an impartial Examination, is ſincere in his Practice, and that both theſe* (*i. e.* ſincere *Enquiry* and ſincere *Practice*) *are neceſſary to denominate the Perſon ſincere*; this ſanguine Writer thus exclaims, *p.* 44. "So that he "that knows any thing leſs than what he "might poſſibly have known; or he that be-"lieves any thing ſhort of what, after the "utmoſt Enquiries, he would have ſeen Reaſon "to believe; and does not act up, and ſteddily "too, unto what he might thus have known "and believed; is, for ought I ſee, (Mr. *Mor-*"*gan* being Judge,) no other than an inſincere "Man, or than a mere Hypocrite, and whom "he himſelf could conſign over to everlaſting "Fire. Alas, are there no Degrees in Since-

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" rity neither, no more than there are in Cer-
" tainty! Shall nothing bear the Name of this
" excellent Grace, but the higheſt Flights we
" can attain unto! What Havock ſhall ſuch a
" Caſuiſtical Divine as this make of the Peace
" and Conſolation of weak Believers! How
" more charitable, as well as juſt, are the Senti-
" ments of our Brethren, who allow that the
" moſt upright Saint upon Earth is not free
" from ſinful Guilt, but often ſees Cauſe to
" complain of a treacherous Heart?" Here it may be obſerved, that our Author throws himſelf all along into Fits of Aſtoniſhment and Surprize; and endeavours to perſuade his Reader, that when I talk of Mens *taking all the Care they can, making the beſt Uſe of their rational Faculties*, &c. to diſcover the Mind and Will of *God* for their own Salvation, that I intended to ſtrain theſe and ſuch-like Expreſſions to the utmoſt Extent of a bare natural Poſſibility, ſo as to exclude the Grace of the Goſpel, and that Pardon which it offers to Sinners upon Repentance, and Faith in, or Dependance on, the Merits, Mediation and Interceſſion of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

But how came Mr. *Fancourt* to make this Diſcovery, that I am no Chriſtian; that I have thrown off the Grace and Mercy of the Goſpel, and all the Benefits of *Chriſt*'s Death to Sinners; and that I can admit of no Salvation or Acceptance with *God*, but upon a ſtrictly faultleſs and unculpable Obedience? Do the Expreſſions, *making the beſt Uſe of our Faculties, taking all the Care we can*, &c. neceſſarily imply ſo much? Or rather, are they not conſtantly, and without Exception, when apply'd to Mens

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moral Conduct, uſed in a lower and more quality'd Senſe? I challenge him to produce any *Caſuiſtical Divine*, or any Philoſopher, Divine, or Moraliſt at all, who has ever uſed theſe Expreſſions in reference to Mens moral Behaviour and Conduct, in the Senſe that he would ſtrain them to.

But does our ſerious Author never exhort his Hearers from the Pulpit, to uſe their beſt Endeavours, and take all the Care they can for their own Salvation? Is he afraid of this, leſt they ſhould look upon their Duty as a Thing impracticable, or leſt he ſhould diſturb the *Peace and Conſolation of Weak Believers?* Does he tell them, that they need not take all the Care they can, and that their beſt Endeavours are not neceſſary in this Caſe; but that they may indulge their Pride, their Malice, and other particular Vices, provided they are but *right and good in the main?* If this be ſo, I doubt our Author's Qualifications are intended only for his particular Friends, and that he cannot allow his Adverſaries to be ſincere upon the ſame Terms.

But 'tis evident, that the very Nature of the Subject, and the obvious Reaſon of the Thing itſelf, might qualify theſe Expreſſions, and that there is no need of making any ſuch particular Reſtrictions. What if one ſhould ſay, that our Author has done *his beſt* in this Performance, and taken *all the Care he can* not to expoſe himſelf to the Pity or Contempt of the Publick; I ſuppoſe the Expreſſions might be allow'd as juſt and proper enough, and what every one would eaſily underſtand. But yet, if I ſhould venture to ſay this, perhaps Mr. *Fancourt* would

call me to a very ſtrict and ſevere Account for it; and maintain, on the contrary, that his Natural Faculties, in their utmoſt Extent, might poſſibly have carried him a little farther.

No Body ſcruples to ſay of a wicked Man, who is ſtrongly and habitually devoted to his Avarice and Ambition, that he takes all the *Care he can* to raiſe and enrich himſelf, and uſes his *beſt Endeavours* to obtain his carnal ſelfiſh End; and if another ſhould take the ſame Care, and uſe the ſame Endeavours to pleaſe *God*, and obtain his Favour, every one would allow him to be ſincere, and that he made the beſt Uſe of his rational Faculties and Talents, in the Purſuit of true Happineſs; tho' in the one Caſe and the other, there might be Room enough for different Degrees of Application and Diligence, conſiſtent with the ſame perſonal Characters, and the ſame general Way of expreſſing them.

Theſe Things are clear and obvious to the meaneſt Capacity, from the natural univerſal Uſe of Language; and therefore our Author, not finding any Difficulty in the Caſe, was forced to make one. Now tho' this might paſs as a ſufficient Reply to all that he has offered concerning *Sincerity*; yet ſince he affects to throw himſelf into Doubts and Perplexities upon the Subject, loads me with a Multitude of Queſtions, and pretends to be at a great Loſs about my Meaning, I ſhall ſubmit my ſelf for a few Pages to the *hard Fate* of being his Catechumen. And here the firſt Thing that puzzles our learned Author, is, what I ſhould mean by an *Impartial Examination*; whether it be

be ſuch Impartiality, Unprejudicedneſs, *&c.* as a Man may be capable of who is ſubject to human Infirmities, Paſſions and wrong Impreſſions, or ſuch as they only can be capable of who are free from all theſe? Sure I am, that I have not given him the leaſt Ground for this Scruple. I always ſpeak of the *Sincerity* of *Men*, and not of *Angels*; and of Men under their preſent *real Circumſtances*, ſuch as they are in *Fact*, and not under any meer imaginary Circumſtances, in which Mr. *Fancourt*, by his Invention and Sagacity, might think fit to place them. What I maintain is this, that *God* will judge and reward Men according to what they are and have, and not according to what they are not and have not; and conſequently, that he will not condemn and puniſh any Man, at any Time, and under any Circumſtances, for not knowing, believing or doing, what that Perſon, at that Time, and under thoſe Circumſtances, could not poſſibly know, believe, or do. Nay, that *God* will not only not condemn Men for any Ignorance or Error abſolutely invincible; but will alſo, by the Grace and Mercy of the Goſpel, make great Allowances in this Caſe, and not condemn or puniſh Men but where their Duty was clear and obvious, eaſy and practicable, by thoſe gracious Aids and Aſſiſtances, Helps and Advantages, which were freely, ſincerely, and compaſſionately offered them.

This is what I have declared for, and the main Principle I inſiſt on, as every one muſt ſee and know; and if Mr. *Fancourt* thinks he can prove the contrary, he is doubtleſs at Liberty, whenever he pleaſes, to make a Trial of his Skill.

He goes on, *p.* 46. to ask whether Men may not be ſincere in their Enquiry, without being ſo in their Practice; and whether it may not be juſt in *God* for this Cauſe, *to ſend them ſtrong Deluſions, that they ſhould believe a Lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had Pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs?* No Body, I preſume, can imagine that *God* is bound to convince and ſave Men, whether they will or no; or that *God* may not juſtly leave thoſe to their wilful choſen Blindneſs, Stupidity, and practical Error, who reſolve to be wicked and profligate in Spite of Evidence and Conviction, and in Oppoſition to all the Reaſons and Motives that can be offered them to the contrary. This is plainly the Caſe, which the Apoſtle ſuppoſes in the Paſſage here referr'd to; but what this is to the Author's Purpoſe, or what he would infer from hence is, I muſt own, beyond my Comprehenſion. There is no Connexion between Speculation and Practice of any Sort or Kind whatever; no Truth in Speculation and Theory which a good Man may know and believe, but the moſt wicked Man upon Earth, however forſaken of *God*, may know and believe the ſame. A Man may be perfectly and thoroughly orthodox in, the Senſe of our *Author*, the *Four Miniſters*, and all *Creed-Makers*; and yet be given up to ſtrong Deluſions to believe a Lie in, the Apoſtle's Senſe, *i. e.* left to their own free Choice under the practical, and therefore damnable Error, of a wicked ungodly Life. The Author's Malice in this Queſtion is viſible enough, though it is no more to his Purpoſe, than if he had ask'd, Whether *God* might not, by his immediate Power, ſu-

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ſpend the Motions of the Planets in their Orbs?

He queries farther, *Whether the Truths which have a neceſſary Connexion with Sincerity, are not as neceſſary, and may not be as much inſiſted on, as Sincerity itſelf?* Without all Doubt: Who ever deny'd it? This is what I contend for, that no Truth can be neceſſary to any Man's Salvation, but what has a neceſſary Connexion with that Man's Sincerity.

He goes on with his Catechiſm, *p.* 47. and asks, *Whether the Truths which have a neceſſary Connexion with and Dependance upon Mr.* Morgan's *Sincerity, muſt needs be the ſame in Number, Kind, and Weight, with the Truths that have a neceſſary Connexion with and Dependance upon another Man's Sincerity?* This is asking, Whether all Mens Capacities and Talents are not equal, or one and the ſame; and whether thoſe who know more, and have more Talents committed to them, are not oblig'd in proportion to do more than others? Which is too eaſy, or rather too trifling a Queſtion to need an Anſwer. But he tells us, *If the Truths which are neceſſarily connected with one Man's Sincerity, are not the very ſame with the Truths which are neceſſarily connected with another Man's Sincerity; it will follow, that the Truths which neither are, nor appear to be, of any Neceſſity or Importance to one Perſon, may really be, and appear ſo to another.* This is very true; I readily grant it; and what then? Why then *the Terms of Salvation, and Terms of Chriſtian Communion to every Man, are not one and the ſame; and ſo that there may be Room for* Chriſtian Charity, *where I am not therefore oblig'd to receive into* Chriſtian Communion. But here I think our Author is

a little myſterious, and ought to explain himſelf farther; for I cannot imagine what Chriſtian Charity Mr. *Fancourt* can have for a Man whom he cannot admit to *Chriſtian Communion*. If he cannot admit a Man to Chriſtian Communion, I hope 'tis becauſe he does not think him qualify'd for it; and that he would not wilfully and knowingly exclude from his Communion thoſe who are qualify'd upon Goſpel Terms for the Kingdom of Heaven. But if he can have this Charity for his diſſenting Brother, to believe that he is a good Chriſtian, in the Favour of God, and entitled to the Kingdom of Heaven; and yet, notwithſtanding this his Judgment concerning him, will exclude him from Chriſtian Communion, or refuſe to communicate with him as a Chriſtian; I muſt leave him to account for this Conduct to our common Lord and Maſter, at the laſt and great Day, ſince I cannot expect that he ſhould ever account for it before.

'Tis evident that this Writer goes upon a Principle, that muſt oblige him to ſeparate Communion from all who know either more or leſs than himſelf: For he who has a greater Capacity, and knows more, will have ſome Talent or other neceſſary to be improved, which cannot be neceſſary in our Author, who has it not; and he whoſe Capacities and Abilities are leſs, may want ſeveral Talents not neceſſary to him, which yet may be of great Importance and Neceſſity to be well apply'd and improv'd by Mr. *Fancourt*, to whom they are committed. Upon this Principle, he muſt ſeparate from, and excommunicate ſome Chriſtians, becauſe they know more, or ſee farther, or clearer than himſelf;

ſelf; and others, becauſe they are not quite ſo wiſe as he: tho' perhaps he might find it hard to form any Church or Congregation of ſuch perfectly *fizeable Believers*. Theſe are his Terms of Communion; which yet are as far from being Chriſtian, as a private, uncharitable, ſchiſmatical Faction is from being the Catholick Church of *Chriſt*, or any Part of it.

But, notwithſtanding theſe different Capacities and Talents of different Perſons under the ſame Chriſtian Diſpenſation; yet the Catholick Terms of Chriſtian Communion and Acceptance with *God*, are the ſame at all Times to every Man alike, and throughout the whole Chriſtian World, how much ſoever it may puzzle Mr. *Fancourt* to conceive of it; and concerning theſe Catholick Terms of Communion and Acceptance with *God*, no Chriſtian could be in any Doubt or Heſitation at all. if human Creeds, and the preſumptuous anti-chriſtian Deciſions of fallible, corrupt, and deſigning Men, had not long ſince eſtabliſhed another Rule of Orthodoxy beſides the Holy Scriptures, and very different Terms of Communion from thoſe which were always declared for and inſiſted upon by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles. But I have already ſaid ſo much upon this Subject in the Two Letters to Mr. *Cumming* and Sir *Richard Blackmore*, that I hope the Reader will excuſe my giving my ſelf any farther Trouble about it, till ſomething more to the Purpoſe ſhall be offered on the other Side.

Mr. *Fancourt* perhaps might think himſelf ſlighted, if I ſhould not take ſome Notice of his new ingenious Hypotheſis concerning the *Trinity*. He thinks, that three diſtinct compleat

Powers of Underſtanding, Willing, *&c.* in the one individual Subſtance of *God*, is a juſt and proper Repreſentation of what the Scripture declares of the Three Perſons, the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*. To expoſe this Hypotheſis in its full Light, and in all its Abſurdities and contradictory Conſequences, would be a very tedious and unneceſſary Work; and therefore I ſhall only make a few brief Remarks upon it, ſuch as may be ſufficient, I ſuppoſe, to overthrow it.

Firſt then, 'tis evident that this Hypotheſis cannot account for the different diſtinguiſhing Offices and Operations of different and diſtinct Perſons or Agents. The Author talks much of diſtinct ſimilar Powers as the Characteriſticks of Perſons, and yet he mentions the Word *Perſons* with great Caution, and ſeems really afraid of the Expreſſion. A ſimilar Power, he owns, is not the *Whole of a Perſon*. If his ſimilar Power be not the *Whole*, he ought to have told us whether it be a Part of the Perſon, and what the other Part is, that we might have known what he intended by a *Whole Perſon*. But I think 'tis evident, that in his Hypotheſis theſe perſonal Powers cannot be Perſons at all, either in Whole or in Part, but only the Properties or Attributes of a Perſon or Perſons. I would ask then, What are the *Perſons*, or *Perſon*, to *whom* theſe *Powers* belong, and by *whom* they are exerted and employ'd? Here, if he would ſpeak, out and ſpeak Senſe in his own Way, he muſt ſay, the active intelligent *Subſtance*, or *Subject*, which being ſuppoſed but one and the ſame, 'tis plain the Perſon or Agent can be but one, who ſometimes

times acts and determines himſelf by one Power, and ſometimes by another. And thus his Hypotheſis does not relieve him at all, ſince he muſt ſtill ſuppoſe *God* to be but one *Perſon* or *Agent*, as well as one *Being*. And this one perſonal Being, or one true *God*, muſt be conſidered as communicating to, and covenanting with himſelf; as ſending and commiſſioning himſelf; commanding and obeying himſelf; as worſhipping and praying to himſelf, and making Satisfaction to himſelf. The ſame individual intelligent Being, or Agent, will make Satisfaction with one Power, and receive Satisfaction with another Power; will inſiſt upon infinite Satisfaction with one Power, and diſpence with all Satisfaction in another Power; will worſhip and obey himſelf with one Power, and receive his own Homage and Obedience with another Power. Nay, the ſame *God*, and the ſame *Perſon*, the ſame active *intelligent Subject*, if this Hypotheſis be Senſe, will act and not act, ſuffer and not ſuffer, be God and no God, Man and no Man. This, I think, muſt be the State and Condition of Chriſtianity, according to our Author's Hypotheſis. But whether this be likely to clear up the Scriptures, or to make Men wiſer and better, or not, I muſt leave him to conſider.

It farther deſerves a particular Remark, that this Hypotheſis, concerning the Being and Perfections of *God*, is purely arbitrary, without any conceivable Ground, Reaſon, or Neceſſity, in the Nature of Things. All that our Author here contends for, is the Poſſibility of his Hypotheſis, or that what he ſuppoſes does not imply a Contradiction in the Nature

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of Things; but then he muſt grant, that the contrary is equally poſſible, and may equally be ſuppoſed, without any Contradiction in the Nature of Things; for he does not pretend to prove that what he has advanc'd is neceſſary, and that it cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe in the Nature and Reaſon of Things; from whence 'tis plain that he has here repreſented *God* as a mere contingent Being, whoſe Exiſtence or Non-Exiſtence are equally poſſible, and may be equally ſuppoſed, without any Contradiction in the Nature and Reaſon of Things. 'Tis evident, that the Author can pretend to no more Reaſon and Neceſſity, in the Nature of the Thing, to ſuppoſe three ſimilar co-ordinate perſonal Powers or Properties, three Underſtandings, three Wills, *&c.* in *God*, than he has to ſuppoſe an indefinite or infinite Number of ſuch perſonal Powers and Properties. One infinitely perfect Underſtanding can know as much as three, or an infinite Number of ſuch Underſtandings; and one abſolutely perfect *Will*, or Power of Acting, can do as much as three, or an infinite Number of ſuch Wills. 'Tis plain then, that the ſuppoſing more than one in this Caſe, muſt be a Suppoſition purely arbitrary, without any Reaſon or Neceſſity in the Nature of Things; and that ſuch a Suppoſition would imply no farther or higher Perfection at all; ſince one abſolutely perfect Underſtanding and Will, muſt be capable and ſufficient to know and do every Thing that is poſſible to be known or done; and to deny this, muſt be a direct and expreſs Contradiction.

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The plain Conſequence of all this is, that Mr. *Fancourt*'s Hypotheſis deſtroys and gives up all the rational demonſtrative Evidence and Proof for the Being and Exiſtence of *One God*, or one ſupreme independent firſt Cauſe, by ſuppoſing *God* to be ſuch a Sort of Being as exiſts without any Reaſon or Neceſſity in the Nature of the Thing. He will ſay, perhaps, that there may be Reaſon and Neceſſity in the Nature of the Thing for the Exiſtence of ſuch a Being as he has repreſented under the Name and Notion of the One *God*, tho' that Reaſon and Neceſſity be undiſcoverable by human Reaſon, as being above and beyond our Underſtandings and Capacities: But ſtill, this will be giving up all the rational Evidence and Proof for the Being and Exiſtence of *God*, and placing Natural Religion upon the ſame Foundation with Atheiſm itſelf.

An Atheiſt will tell him, that the Univerſe is eternal, neceſſary, and ſelf-exiſtent, by an infinite eternal Series and Succeſſion of neceſſary natural Cauſes and Effects. Now how would Mr. *Fancourt* confute ſuch an Adverſary, and overthrow this Atheiſtical Hypotheſis? Would he ſay, that 'tis moſt unreaſonable and abſurd, to ſuppoſe the neceſſary Self-Exiſtence of Things, which are evidently in their own Nature contingent, and for whoſe Exiſtence there is no more apparent Reaſon or Neceſſity, in the Nature of the Things themſelves, than for their Non-Exiſtence; and conſequently, that they cannot poſſibly exiſt by an abſolute intrinſick Neceſſity in the Things themſelves, but muſt neceſſarily derive their Exiſtence from the free Agency of ſome firſt independent Cauſe?

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He cannot, with any Grace, urge this, or any ſuch like Argument againſt an Atheiſt; becauſe the other would eaſily turn his own Hypotheſis upon him, and make it appear, that he himſelf ſuppoſes the ſame Thing concerning *God*; and that there is no more Reaſon or Neceſſity, in the Nature of the Thing, for the Exiſtence of ſuch a Being as he has repreſented under the Name of *God*, than there is for the neceſſary eternal Self-Exiſtence of the Univerſe itſelf, independent of any extrinſick efficient Cauſe at all. I hope our Author would not here appeal with his Atheiſt, from Reaſon to Scriptures, tho' I think he would have no other Way for it: but with what Succeſs, I muſt leave him to conſider.

The plain Truth of the Caſe is, in ſhort, this: No eſſential Attribute or Perfection can poſſibly belong to God at all, which does not neceſſarily belong to him, ſo as to imply the Impoſſibility of the contrary, in the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing. The Scripture reveals many Things concerning the Good-Will and Pleaſure, the Actions or free Operations of *God*, and the Exerciſe and Diſplay of his natural eſſential Attributes and Perfections, in his Diſpenſations of Grace towards his Creatures; but it reveals no new eſſential Attribute or Perfection in *God*, which was not known or demonſtrable before from the Principles of Natural Religion, and the Reaſon of the Thing itſelf. How poſſible ſoever therefore the Author's Hypotheſis might be, when apply'd to contingent Beings, whoſe Exiſtence depends upon the good Pleaſure and free Agency of *God*; yet 'tis plainly impoſſible and contradictory,

ry, when apply'd to *God* himſelf, as a neceſſary ſelf-exiſtent Being; who exiſts, not by any Will or Pleaſure, but by Nature and Neceſſity: I ſay, his Hypotheſis here is plainly impoſſible and contradictory, becauſe it ſuppoſes eſſential Attributes and Perfections in *God*, without any Neceſſity in the Nature of the Thing; and thereby deſtroys and nullifies all the natural Evidence for the Being and Exiſtence of one *God*. Now, whether this Writer will chuſe to quit his own Hypotheſis, or give up all the rational demonſtrative Evidence for the Being and Exiſtence of one *God*, I cannot tell; but I am fully and clearly perſuaded, that he muſt do one of them; and ſince he has diſcarded the Principles of Reaſon and Natural Religion, it muſt doubtleſs be worth the Publick's while, to ſee what Work he would next make with Scripture.

It may be worth ſome Notice here, that our Author, to give ſome Colour to his three ſimilar Powers, or three co-ordinate diſtinct Sets of all perſonal Attributes and Perfections in *God*, pretends that there are in *God*, and in every Perſon, three diſtinct diſſimilar Powers, which he diſtinguiſhes by the Power of Underſtanding, the Power of Willing, and the Power of Doing. That theſe three are not one and the ſame, but different Powers and Principles of Action, he ſays he is *ready to demonſtrate*; but he has luckily ſpared his *Demonſtration*, and I am well aſſur'd that he has good Reaſon for it.

'Tis evident, that what he calls the *Power* of *Underſtanding* in *God*, is no *Power* at all, nor has

has any Relation at all to *Action*. *God*'s infinite Underſtanding, or *Omniſcience*, by which he knows all Things, is not an Action, but a neceſſary eſſential Attribute, or Property; and he might, with as good Senſe, talk of the Power of *Exiſting*, as of the Power of *Underſtanding* in *God*.

'Tis I think farther evident, that *Willing* and *Doing*, are the ſame Thing in *God*, and indeed in every other Agent. Every Action muſt be an Act of the Will, or a particular Determination of the ſelf-moving Power; nor is it poſſible to conceive of any other Action. But what the Author ſeems to aim at here, if he aims at any Thing, is this, that different Acts ſuppoſe different Wills, or Principles of Action, in the ſame Agent; or that the Power and Principle of Action muſt be as different, as the various Acts and Objects to which it is apply'd and determin'd: By which Rule and Way of Talking, he might have found not only three, but three hundred, or, if he had pleas'd, an infinite Number of different and diſtinct Wills, Powers, and Principles of Action, in every particular Man. He might have diſtinguiſh'd, for Inſtance, between the Power of Thinking, the Power of Speaking, the Power of Writing, the Power of Walking, and the Power of Trifling, and the Power of being very conceited, and very impertinent. From hence 'tis plain, that our Author's three diſſimilar Powers reſolve themſelves into one ſimilar Power, *i. e.* into the one Principle of Action, or the Will of the Agent. But, to take him in his own Way; there are in *God* three co-ordinate ſimilar Powers, under each of which

which are included three ſimilar Powers of Underſtanding, Willing, and Doing. And thus, according to this Hypotheſis, *God* is a Being endued in the Whole with *Twelve Powers*, *Three* ſimilar Powers, and *Nine* diſſimilar *Ones*. And is not this a fine Way of Talking concerning the Being and eſſential Perſons of *God*, and a likely Means of enlightening People's Underſtandings in the right Knowledge of *God* and the Holy Scriptures? 'Tis poſſible that I may not eſcape with this Writer, and ſome of his zealous angry Friends, the Cenſure of Impiety and Prophaneneſs, only for expoſing in him a moſt ſenſeleſs Abuſe of the Name and Attributes of *God*; which, however it may conſiſt with Piety and a good Intention, cannot certainly conſiſt with a *Zeal according to Knowledge*.

I cannot but here obſerve farther, what appears to me very evident, that this Writer, while he talks of the *Being*, *Unity*, and *Perfections* of *God*, and labours to diſtinguiſh an individual intelligent *Being* from an individual *Perſon*, deſtroys the only Principle of Individuation, and has no Mark or Characteriiſtck at all left of *different Being*. 'Tis plain, that he all along abſtracts the general Idea, or rather the general Name of *Being*, from all the Attributes, Properties, and Perfections of Being; and then he maintains that *God* is *one Being*, under that general confuſed Senſe, or metaphyſical Nonſenſe, in which all Beings are *one*; and there can be no poſſible Characteriſtick, or any Mark of Diſtinction, betwixt one Being and another. But is this all that the Scripture intends by the Unity of *God*, or by declaring that *God is one*,

that

that he is one abſtract metaphyſical *Eſſence*, *Subſtance*, or *Subſtratum*? Does the *One God* ſignify nothing but an *Ens Rationis*, or a mere Creature of the Imagination?

He who can perſuade himſelf, that the Names of *God* in Scripture, which are ſo plainly *perſonal*, and ſo evidently characteriſtical of one ſingle individual *Agent*, or one independent firſt *Cauſe*; he, I ſay, who can think that theſe Names ſtand only for one abſtract metaphyſical Subſtance, or *Subſtratum*, muſt have an Underſtanding ſtrangely turned to miſtake plain Senſe, and to run into eternal Darkneſs and Confuſion. Dr. *Waterland*, while he is ſpeaking of the *Unity* of *God*, owns, that he has no Principle of Individuation in this Caſe, which he ſays is a Thing very much wanted: That is, in plain *Engliſh*, he underſtands nothing by the *Unity* of *God*, and has no Meaning to the Terms of this Propoſition, *God is One*. And have not theſe Gentlemen brought the Cauſe of all Religion, and of Chriſtianity in particular, to a fine Paſs, while they have been diſputing ſo long about the Unity of *God*, till they have loſt it, and are driven to confeſs that they mean nothing by it? When our Author ſhall pleaſe to let us know clearly and diſtinctly what he means by the Words, *Being*, *Subſtance*, *Perſon*, and *One God*, as he makes uſe of them in this Controverſy, it will ſoon appear that he is really a *Sabellian*, or a *Tritheiſt*, and that there can be no poſſible orthodox Medium between theſe two; I mean, according to the preſent Meaſure and Standard of Orthodoxy; tho' no doubt but there is a true and ſcriptural Medium betwixt theſe two Extreams.

I ſhall

I ſhall make but one Remark more upon this Hypotheſis; which is, that it cannot at all ſerve to ſcreen the Author from that popular Odium, which he endeavours with a little Art, and a great deal of Malice, to throw upon his Adverſaries. His Invention cannot help him at all, but he muſt be ſtill preſs'd with all thoſe Difficulties, which he thinks ſo very great and unſurmountable, and would repreſent as affecting only the contrary Scheme. Upon his own Principle, and in his own Hypotheſis, it muſt be true, that *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Son of *God*, and the only Mediator betwixt *God* and Men, is not only a ſubordinate derived Being, but a Creature, a very imperfect Creature, and a *mere Man*. Will he ſay, contrary to ſo many clear and expreſs Texts, that the Man *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, or the human Perſon born of the Virgin, was not *Jeſus Chriſt*, the *Son of God*, and the *only Mediator betwixt God and Man*? Will he ſay, that the Man *Chriſt* was only Man in general, or an abſtract human Nature, but no particular real Man, no human Perſon? Or will he pretend that the Man *Chriſt*, or the human Perſon born of the Virgin, is perſonally the ſupreme *God*, and even the ſecond co-ordinate ſimilar Power in that imaginary metaphyſical Being, as it ſtands in his own Hypotheſis? Let him ſhew how, upon his own Hypotheſis and Principles, he can free himſelf from any of thoſe Difficulties which he charges upon the *Arians*, or even the *Socinians* themſelves; and I ſhall then think him in good earneſt, and begin to look upon him as an Adverſary worth diſputing with. But if he cannot do this, as I am very ſure he cannot, he muſt be obliged in Conſcience ſo-

lemnly to repent, and humble himself in the Presence of *God*, and to ask Pardon of his Adversaries before the World, for his most gross and scandalous Abuse of them, as if they lessen'd the Glory and Dignity of *Jesus Christ*, the *Son of God*, and did not think as highly of him, or even more highly and honourably than this Writer himself.

The Pains which Mr. *Fancourt* and such Sort of Writers are at, to obscure, perplex, and render unintelligible, the very first Principles of all Religion, concerning the Notion and Belief of *One God*, and the uncharitable Zeal they discover in unchurching and hereticating all those who cannot give into their dark inexplicable Schemes, is what one cannot look upon but with a great deal of Surprize, and some Indignation.

The *Unity of God* had been ever thought a Principle very plain and intelligible, and obvious enough to the common Sense and Reason of Mankind, till certain Refiners upon St. *Paul* and the Scriptures took it into a System of *School-Divinity*; and then the *Christian Doctrines*, by the Help of *Pagan Metaphysicks*, were thrown all into Darkness and Confusion. The *Creed-Makers* found they had a profitable Trade, and gain'd much in lessening the Number of Candidates for Church-Preferments, by turning the Articles of Faith into unintelligible inexplicable Mysteries, which none but *themselves* could understand or explain. In short, he was thought the best Christian, who understood the least of his own Faith; and it came at length to be look'd upon as a Point of Merit in a Man, stiffly to maintain, that the Christian Revelation is no Revelation at all, or that it reveals Things

which

which cannot poſſibly be reveal'd, becauſe they are incomprehenſible to human Underſtandings.

What Pity is it our Author had not been at *Athens* with St. *Paul*, to have help'd him out while he was preaching to thoſe polite Heathens, and inſtructing them in the Principles of Natural and Reveal'd Religion, concerning the perſonal Unity and Perfections of the *True God*, and the perſonal mediatorial Office of *Jeſus Chriſt*? The Apoſtle there, while he profeſſedly ſets himſelf to rectify the *Athenian* Notions, by maintaining the perſonal Unity and abſolute Supremacy of the *True God*, has ſo little of this School-Divinity, that one ſhould be apt to think he did not underſtand it, if our Author could no way demonſtrate the contrary. But Mr. *Fancourt*, had he been there preſent, could have told the Apoſtle, that he was miſtaken in the Repreſentation he had there made of the *One True God*; that he had omitted a very neceſſary eſſential Point in his Deſcription of *God*; and that the *Athenians*, by his Account of the Matter, could form no true Notion or Conception at all of the Unity and Perfections of *God*. Our Author could have told St. *Paul*, that *God* was not an individual perſonal Agent, or one Supreme Almighty Creator and Governor of the World; but a Triune Being; and that, under the Notion of three perſonal Powers, we muſt conceive a co-ordinate Triplicity of all Divine Attributes and Perfections in *God*, three Underſtandings, three Wills, *&c.* and, as far as can be underſtood upon the Principles of common Senſe, three infinite co-ordinate Minds: For tho' he pretends to maintain a Unity of *Being*, yet 'tis plain that he abſtracts

the Idea, or rather the general Name of *Being*, from all the actual and really exiſtent Attributes and Properties and Perfections of Being; and ſo, by *Being*, can mean nothing but the abſtract Idea of Being in general, as common to every Thing that really exiſts.

Mr. *Fancourt* could likewiſe have informed St. *Paul*, that *Jeſus Chriſt was* not *perſonally* that Man *whom* God *had ordained to judge the World, of which he had given us Aſſurance in raiſing him from the Dead*; but that this Man *Chriſt* was himſelf *perſonally* the ſupreme independent Creator of the Univerſe, whom the *Athenians* had ignorantly worſhipped, and to whom they had all along inſcrib'd their Altars, as to the *unknown God*. He could have aſſured the Apoſtle, that *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* never was a *human Perſon*; that he had no real human perſonal Exiſtence; that his human Nature was no human Nature, or any thing like human Nature, as having no real human Perſonality; and that, if the one ſupreme *God* himſelf, who was the Perſon offended, had not made Satisfaction for Sin, (*i. e.* if the Mediator had not been the ſupreme *God*,) there could have been no ſufficient Satisfaction made for Sin at all.

Theſe, and many other Things of equal Importance and Neceſſity, were St. *Paul* now living, our Author could acquaint him with, and inſtruct him in; concerning which, as may reaſonably be preſumed, the Apoſtle in his Time knew nothing at all. Thus are Men confounded with their own Inventions, and loſt in the Wilds of their own Imaginations, when, not content with the *pure uncorrupt Word of God*, they muſt needs be *wiſe above what is written*.

While

While we call for plain Scripture, and require them to prove the Neceſſity of what they inſiſt on from the Word of *God*, they continually put us off with their *own Conſequences*, inſtead of Scripture; in which Conſequences, when examined, they are always ſo unhappy as to condemn themſelves.

But I muſt remember that our Author is no common Adverſary, as being a very great and able Metaphyſician: And really I know not what will become of me for provoking him thus far; for if he ſhould not be able to clear his Hypotheſis from theſe and ſuch like Objections, yet there is no Doubt but he will make it appear that he can ſtill farther involve himſelf and his Subject, and talk more darkly and unintelligibly than ever. 'Tis poſſible, therefore, this may be the laſt Time I ſhall ever give my Readers any Trouble on Mr. *Fancourt*'s Account, with whom I had never been concerned at all in any Controverſy, had it not been for the Sake of his Superiors, whoſe Cauſe he undertook, I think without much *Reaſon*, and the World will now judge with what *Succeſs*. 'Tis not unlikely but the Author will complain, as uſual, that I have miſrepreſented him, and miſtaken his true Senſe. I can only ſay, as to this, that I have not willingly miſtaken or miſrepreſented him: I have endeavour'd to underſtand him right; tho' indeed his Way of Thinking is ſo very odd and peculiar, that I can never expect fully to comprehend him; and rather than mean any thing that is intelligible and refutable, I doubt not but he will chuſe at length, what has been the laſt Reſort of other learned Men, to *mean nothing at all*.

I ſpeak not any Thing of this to diſcourage the Author from Writing again, and maintaining what he takes to be the Truth, in a Caſe which he apprehends of ſuch vaſt Importance: This, doubtleſs, he will look upon as his indiſpenſable Duty; and tho' I may not perhaps be at Leiſure my ſelf, yet if he advances any thing of Conſequence, he need not doubt but ſome Body or other will take a proper Notice of him, and pay him all the Deference his Argument deſerves. To conclude, if any ſhould think that I have treated this Writer with too little Ceremony, I only deſire they would read over his *Enthuſiaſm Retorted*; and if they can ſoberly and impartially think, that his Wit or Argument, his Equity and Juſtice, his Civility and Decency, his Candour, Charity or Moderation, deſerve better Treatment; I will publickly ask his Pardon.

The Abſurdity of Oppoſing FAITH *to* REASON:

OR, A

DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

Againſt the

Power of ENTHUSIASM.

In Anſwer to

Mr. *BRADBURY*'s SERMON on the Fifth of *November*, entituled, *The Nature of Faith.*

Addreſs'd to the *Five Miniſters* concern'd with him in carrying on the Lecture at *Pinners-Hall.*

CHRISTIANITY
OR
DEFENCE
OF
FAITH to REASON:



The Abſurdity of Oppoſing FAITH *to* REASON:

OR, A

DEFENCE

OF

CHRISTIANITY, *&c.*

MR. *Thomas Bradbury* having thought fit, in his Chriſtian Wiſdom, openly, and in the Face of the World, to renounce all Pretenſions to Reaſon; it will perhaps be look'd upon as needleſs, and to no Purpoſe, to urge him farther with any thing of Argument or Reaſon againſt what he advances. But tho' it cannot be expected that this

this Gentleman ſhould hearken to any thing of Reaſon, yet it may not be amiſs to take a little Notice of him, for the Sake of thoſe who are not quite ſo much beſides themſelves, and who may be diſpos'd, in ſpite of Mr. *Bradbury*, to exerciſe their Reaſon in Matters of Faith. I am very well perſwaded that many of thoſe who permit Mr. *Bradbury* to eſpouſe their Cauſe, would willingly be thought, what they really are, ſober, and in their right Senſes; and, upon this Foot, I hope to convince them, that they ought not to follow, nor even to ſuffer this blind Reviler, who, in the Heat of his Imagination, has loſt not only his Reaſon, but his Faith too, becauſe he has loſt himſelf. Very hard indeed would the Caſe, if the Faith of the Goſpel ſhould oblige Men to renounce the only Thing that diſtinguiſhes them from the Beaſts, and makes them capable of any Religion at all. And ſince 'tis Reaſon alone which puts us into a Capacity of receiving any thing as a divine Revelation, in order to eternal Life and Happineſs, and without which, we could neither know God nor enjoy him; I would hope that very few who bear the Chriſtian Name, can ever be tempted to join with Mr. *Bradbury* in lampooning their Creator for making them rational. This ſublime Believer, being got above the Force of Evidence and rational Conviction, is certainly out of reach; and ſince he ſcorns to be diſputed with, and cannot bear the Affront, I would not be thought, in what follows, to ſpeak one Word to Mr. *Bradbury*: I ſpeak only to thoſe who think themſelves obliged to hearken to Reaſon; and therefore, I am ſure that Mr. *Bradbury* cannot,

with

with any Senſe or Conſiſtency, look upon himſelf as concerned. However, if any thing I ſhall here ſay ſhould chance to throw this poor Gentleman into new ſurprizing Fits, attended with farther ill Symptoms; if his irreconcilable Enemy, *Reaſon*, ſhould happen to find him out in his dark Receſſes, and diſturb the Repoſe of his beloved Frenzy; I can only adviſe his Adverſaries to look to themſelves, and beſeech his prudent Friends, if he has any ſuch left, to take a little Care of him; ſince it muſt be now evident to the whole World, that a Man under his Circumſtances ought not to be truſted with a Pen in his Hand.

In my *Poſtſcript* to the *Letter of Enthuſiaſm*, I made it appear that Mr. *Bradbury*, in what he had publiſhed under your Patronage, had betray'd and given up the Chriſtian Cauſe, expoſed Religion to Contempt, and left himſelf no Ground or Principle upon which he could poſſibly ſupport the Goſpel Revelation againſt Deiſts and Infidels. This, which I endeavour'd at leaſt with ſome Appearance of Reaſon to make good againſt him, he has neither had the Honour to retract, nor the Courage to defend; but being too infallible for the one, and too weak and inſufficient for the other, he has choſen rather to perſiſt in the old Strain, without taking the leaſt Notice of what had been urg'd againſt him; and has thereby given the World a new Specimen, how far Reaſon and Common Senſe may be loſt in the Wilds of Enthuſiaſm.

His laſt Fifth of *November* Sermon, concerning *the Nature of Faith*, muſt, I think, be allow'd as one of the moſt extraordinary Performances

mances that has ever appear'd in the Enthuſiaſtick Way. He has at length, in his own Imagination, obtain'd a complete Victory over Reaſon, and put himſelf for ever out of the Power and Reach of this Enemy. Reaſon, it ſeems, has awaken'd all his Rage, by offering Violence to his Faith; and therefore, he has vow'd Revenge, that *Reaſon* ſhall *die* the *Death*. He ſaw very well that nothing but *Reaſon* ſtood in his Way, and that his *Argument* could no more conſiſt with *it* than his *Faith*. Having therefore heroickly executed his Vengeance upon Reaſon, as a Traitor and a mortal Enemy, he ſets up Faith as a blind infallible Guide, in Oppoſition to the Law of Nature, and the common Senſe of Mankind.

Faith is, according to him, in all Reſpects contradictory to Reaſon. 'Tis an Obedience to Commands, that Reaſon cannot comply with; a Dependance upon Promiſes, that Reaſon cannot ſubſcribe to; a continual Regard to *Jeſus Chriſt*, who to Reaſon is a Stone of Sumbling; and a Repoſe of Soul upon Heaven and Immortality, which to Reaſon is all Enthuſiaſm.

Before I proceed to examine what he has offer'd in Proof of theſe grand Abſurdities, I ſhall firſt ſettle the Meaning of the Terms, and lay down the common Principles upon which this whole Matter depends.

By *Reaſon*, then, is ever underſtood, either, 1. The intellectual Faculty itſelf, by which we are enabled to perceive and judge of the Nature and Relations of Things, and to diſtinguiſh between Truth and Falſhood; or elſe, 2. The objective Evidence, or rational Proof,

in

in which Truth is propoſed and aſſented to by the Underſtanding. Faith is an Aſſent of the Underſtanding to the Truth of a Propoſition upon credible Teſtimony; which credible Teſtimony is in this Caſe the objective Evidence, or rational Ground of Truth. To oppoſe *Faith* to *Reaſon* then, is to deſtroy it, and loſe its very Nature and Eſſence. And hence the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, defining that Faith which is there conſider'd, and ſo highly recommended, calls it *the Evidence*, ἔλεγχος, the Argument, the Reaſon, or convincing Proof of thoſe *inviſible Things*. Where every one muſt ſee, that the Word *Faith* is taken objectively for the Doctorine of Faith, *i. e.* the ſure Word and Teſtimony of God, which is the objective Evidence, or rational Proof to our Underſtanding and Reaſon, that the Things thus atteſted are true. Now, tho' Matters of Faith may be diſtinguiſh'd from Principles of Reaſon, on Account of the different Way and Manner of conveying thoſe different Truths to the Mind, yet they cannot poſſibly be oppoſite or contradictory to each other; becauſe Truth, in its whole Frame and Connexion, muſt be neceſſarily conſiſtent with itſelf; and 'tis evidently impoſſible that one thing which is *true*, ſhould be repugnant or contradictory to any thing elſe that is at the ſame time *true*. And from hence 'tis plain, that nothing can be true as a Matter of Faith, that is inconſiſtent with, or repugnant to, any clear eſtabliſh'd Principle of Reaſon; ſince to affirm this, muſt neceſſarily deſtroy the Nature and Foundation of Truth, which muſt, in its whole Frame and Connexion, be perfectly conſiſtent, or elſe there can be no

ſuch

ſuch thing as Truth at all. To ſuppoſe that a Thing may be true as a Matter of Faith, and capable of being receiv'd and aſſented to upon Teſtimony, whether it be credible or incredible, poſſible or impoſſible, in the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing itſelf, is an Extremity to which none have been been ever driven, but thoſe who have defended *Tranſubſtantiation*, or ſomething of the ſame Nature; and who, rather than own themſelves fallible or miſtaken, have reſolved to father their Abſurdities and Contradictions upon the Spirit of Truth. I muſt here obſerve farther, that this Propoſition, *viz.* whatever God reveals, is true, or whatever God commands is reaſonable and fit to be done: This, I ſay, is not properly a Matter of Faith, but a Principle of Reaſon. Nothing can be more certain or demonſtrable than this, that God cannot lie, and that it muſt be our higheſt Wiſdom and Intereſt to believe and obey him. That God can neither deceive nor be deceiv'd, is one of the firſt and moſt evident Principles of Reaſon and Natural Religion. Here then we depend upon no Teſtimony; the Thing is properly an Object of Knowledge or Certainty, and not a Matter of mere Belief. There is a vaſt Difference betwixt this Propoſition, *God cannot lie*, and this, *Man cannot be miſtaken:* And 'tis the certain Characteriſtick of an Enthuſiaſt, to ſubſtitute one for the other; to confound his own fallible Opinion, or Senſe of Scripture, with the certain infallible Word of God; and the condemn all as Unbelievers, Anti-ſcripturiſts, and Oppoſers of the Truth of God, who are not of his Mind, or who cannot underſtand the Scripture in his Senſe.

Having

Having premiſed thus much, I may now lay down the great univerſal Principle, or Law of Reaſon, by which all rational intelligent Creatures are eternally and indiſpenſably bound; which is this, that every reaſonable Creature, under all poſſible Circumſtances, ought to determine his Judgment and Choice by the Evidence of Truth to his Underſtanding, ſuch as it ſhall appear to him after a ſincere impartial Enquiry; and in Conſequence of this, ſteddily purſue the greateſt Good he can apprehend himſelf capable of, and deſigned for. This Principle is as demonſtrable from the Nature of Things as the Being of a God, and therefore muſt be allow'd as a Principle of Reaſon. He who acts upon this Principle, as here ſuppoſed, muſt be a faithful Perſon, or a truly virtuous and good Man, in the Senſe of any particular moral Diſpenſation whatever, under which he may be placed for the Trial of his Obedience. A Conduct ſuitable to this univerſal unchangeable Law of Reaſon, is what I, and all the World who are under no Neceſſity to the contrary, mean by a *Rational Conduct*, or acting agreeable to Reaſon. And herein evidently conſiſt the higheſt Wiſdom and Virtue, Perfection and Happineſs of Men and Angels. No Man can receive any thing as a Revelation from God, or be influenced by the future Proſpects of Religion, or the Sanctions of eternal Life and Death, but by acting in Conformity to this natural immutable Law of God and Reaſon. Under every Diſpenſation of God's Providence and Grace, this general Principle, or Law, will determine the particular Obligation of the rational Subject, which therefore muſt be one and the ſame

throughout

throughout the whole intellectual World. Now in Consequence of this, it may be proper to observe here, (before I pass to a more particular Account of our *dark Preacher*,) that there are two distinct and contrary Principles of Self-determination, by which Men are governed and directed in their different and contrary Choice and Practice, *viz.* the Light of Truth, or the objective Evidence of Things to the Understanding, on the one Hand; and on the other, the Weight or Impulse of bodily Pleasure and Pain, annexed to the several Appetites and Passions, as the necessary Effect and Impression of material Objects. The one of these is the rational Principle of Self-determination, and the other the brutal or irrational. And 'tis in Consequence of a Man's determining himself upon one or the other of these contrary Principles, that his Conduct is denominated either wise, rational, and virtuous, or foolish, irrational, and wicked. The Beasts, who have no Capacity of abstracting their Ideas, or of reasoning about the Nature and Consequences of Things, are unavoidably determined by the Impressions of material Objects upon their Senses, Appetites and Passions, without any Power of diverting or over-ruling the Determinations: A Beast will struggle and use all his Efforts against Pain, or to get rid of any present Uneasiness, tho' it should be necessary to save his Life, because you cannot convince him that what he now suffers is for his real Advantage, and will turn to his future Account. And this is the very Principle of Self-determination and Conduct in brutish and unreasonable Men: They have Souls indeed endued with rational Faculties,

ties, which, if they would exercise as they ought, must direct them to an infinitely greater Good than the present Gratifications of Sense and Appetite, even the Joys and Glories of Eternity, as revealed to our Understandings in the Gospel, and made the Objects of a rational Faith and Hope: But these they overlook and disregard; in opposition to all Reason, they give up themselves to the Influence and blind Impulse of their Appetites and Passions, and so are determined like the Beasts by the pleasurable or painful Impressions of material sensible Objects. Here then the Principle of Self-determination is the same in the Man and in the Beast: But the Difference lies in this, that in the one it is owing to Nature and Necessity, whereas in the other it is the Consequence of a foolish and unreasonable, but yet free and unnecessitated, Choice. This Weight and Impulse of the Appetites and Passions, and the Bias thereby given towards the Pleasures and Enjoyments of Sense, is what St. *Paul* calls the *Law in the Members*, *the carnal Mind*, the *natural* or *animal Man*, &c. which we are to subdue and mortify by Faith and Self-denial, *i. e.* by overbearing and resisting the brutal Principle of Sense, Appetite and blind Impulse, and determining ourselves by the contrary Principle of rational Evidence, and intellectual Pleasure, and a regard to the Directions the Spirit has given us in the Revelation of the Divine Will.

The Capacity of doing this in reasonable Creatures is the Foundation of all moral Government, without which there could be no such thing as a State of Probation in order to any

future Rewards or Punishments; and the actual Exercise of such a Power, by the Helps and Assistances which God has given us, is the *very Point*, in which consist all Faith, Virtue, and true Religion.

I have chosen to give this short Account of the common Principles of Reason and Religion, and to cast them here together in one View, that the Reader may be the more easily let into the true State of the Controversy, and be the better able to judge from what follows, whether Mr. *Bradbury* has given a right Account of the *Nature of Faith*.

Here then, to give a general Specimen of this Gentleman's Method of proving Things, and to let the Reader see what he is to expect from him, I shall set down the doctrinal Part of his Discourse in its whole Order and Connexion. Having observed in the Opening of his Text, that the Faith mentioned in the 11th to the *Hebrews*, the Faith in which those holy Men died, and by which the Elders *obtained a good Report*, was conversant about distant and invisible Things, or that the Object of it was something beyond the present Reach of Sense, he from hence takes occasion to lay down four *Riddles*, or *Paradoxes*, as containing both the Theory and Practice of his *Mysterious Faith*.

Page 6, 7. "There were four Things that "may be called the chief Practice of their "Faith, by which it appear'd how much they "conversed with Invisibles and Futurities.

"1. Their Obedience to those Commands "that Reason could not comply with.

"2. Their

" 2. Their Dependance upon thoſe Promiſes " that Reaſon could not ſubſcribe to.

" 3. Their continual Regard to Chriſt Jeſus, who to Reaſon is a Stone of Stumbling. And,

" 4. Their great Repoſe of Soul upon Hea- " ven and Immortality, which to Reaſon is " all Enthuſiaſm."

To this he immediately ſubjoins: " It is " very evident from thoſe Examples that the " Apoſtle brings into his Record, that theſe " are the Things for which they have *obtained* " *a good Report*: And therefore theirs could by " no means be called a rational Religion, in " the Senſe the Word now bears among us. " Their Faith was employ'd in Duties that " Reaſon oppoſed, and upon Promiſes that " Reaſon ſuſpected, and about a Saviour whoſe " Perſon, Nature, Offices, and Errand, are " to the *Natural Man*, i. e. to *Reaſon*, no bet- " ter than Fooliſhneſs." But how comes this to be ſo *very evident*? And why could not theirs be a *rational Religion in the Senſe the Word now bears among us*? I am ſure he has yet given no *Reaſon* for it; and perhaps he will think it very unreaſonable in any one to expect it, after he has declared himſelf ſo intirely againſt the *uſe of Reaſon*. All that he does here, is purely to aſſert the ſame Abſurdity three Times over in different Words; from which triple Declaration of his own, he concludes that the Thing to be proved is *very evident*; and therefore it *muſt be ſo*. Is it evident that Faith muſt be irrational or contrary to Reaſon, and that theirs could not be a *rational Religion*, becauſe they acted by *Faith*, and believed what they *could not ſee*? If this be a good Reaſon, it will follow,

low, that all Faith as ſuch muſt be eſſentially and in its own Nature contrary to Reaſon; and then it muſt be contrary to Reaſon in me, or any others who have not ſeen Mr. *Bradbury*, to believe there is any ſuch Man in the World. He is not viſible to the Hundred Thouſandth Part of Mankind, and the Multitudes who have not, or cannot ſee him, muſt depend upon Teſtimony for his very Exiſtence; which according to him would be very irrational, and contrary to Reaſon; and indeed Mr. *Bradbury* is ſo very myſterious and unaccountable a Gentleman, that one could not in point of Charity have believed there had been any *ſuch Perſon* in the World, upon *any human Teſtimony* but his *own*.

He goes on: "The People who tell us that "God commands nothing but what Nature "knows to be uſeful, and reveals nothing but "what it ſees to be evident, have caſt their "Religion into another Mould from that of "thoſe Patriarchs who are collected into the "Rolls of Faith."

I would here ask, not Mr. *Bradbury*, who is ſuppoſed to be out of reach and hearing, but the ſober impartial World, what he can poſſibly mean in this Place by *Nature*, and the *natural Man*? If he means with the Scripture, the mere *animal Man*, the *Body of Sin*, *the Fleſh*, or the corrupt Principle of Luſt, Appetite and brutal blind Impulſe, what he ſays muſt be this: The People who tell us that God commands nothing but what the Fleſh or brutal Appetite knows to be uſeful, and reveals nothing but what Senſe and Paſſion ſee to be evident, have caſt their Religion into another Mould from that of thoſe Patriarchs

who

who are collected into the Rolls of Faith. Now this is very true of those imaginary People; and if there were any such in the World, I should look upon them to be almost as great Paradoxes, and as much out of their Wits, as Mr. *Bradbury*: But as I have never seen or heard of any such People, I am in great hopes that they exist only in this Preacher's *wild Imagination*, and that they can be the Objects of nothing but Mr. *Bradbury*'s *Faith*. If it should be said, that by *Nature* and the *natural Man*, he means Reason as employ'd about mere natural Objects, or Man considered as under the Light and Law of Nature only, without the farther additional Evidence of Revelation; then what he says must amount to this: That the People who tells us that God commands nothing but what Men knew before to be useful by the Light of Nature only, and reveals nothing but what was evident before without any Revelation at all, have cast their Faith into another Mould, *&c.* Now this is likewise very true of this other sort Chimerical People; but then these People are absolutely *Invisible*, and such as Mr. *Bradbury* could never have discovered, but by the Exercise of a strong and lively *Faith*. 'Tis impossible to find any Excuse for this Calumniator, while he endeavours to cast so vile and groundless a Reflection upon his Adversaries, without supposing him to be literally out of his Wits; tho' if he be so, one Thing I am sure of, that *much Learning* has not made him mad.

Some perhaps may be here apt to wonder how Mr. *Bradbury* came to mistake the Beast for the Man, and to fall foul upon Reason un-

der the Name and Character of Sense, Appetite, and brutal Impulse. To account for which, it must be considered, that *Reason* had basely affronted him, by laughing at his *Faith*; and having no other way to be revenged, he thought of this silly and ridiculous one; he goes to Scripture, and from thence fetches out the mere *animal Nature*, the *Body of Sin*, the *Flesh*, or brutal Appetite, which Image of *Belial* he sets up to the View of his Audience, crying out, See, my Beloved! This is that *Reason!* That *Traitor* to God and Religion, which my Adversaries would make Lord and King in opposition to *Faith!* Thus he lays about him in his dark Vengeance; and having spent his Rage, and inflamed the Passions of the People against this carnal sensual Devil *Reason*, he comes off at length with the Air of a Conqueror in the Opinion of all those who are blind and implicit enough to believe that he has entirely vanquish'd his Enemy, and obtained a complete Victory over *Reason*, while he has been only contradicting, befooling, and exposing *himself*. Mr. *Bradbury* it seems walks by *Faith*; but he owns that his *Faith* sees neither by Sense nor Reason: And since there are no other known Faculties, or conceivable Ways of seeing, must not the Blind here lead the Blind? Faith is the *Evidence* of Things not seen; the Evidence to *what*? Not to the Faculty of Eyesight doubtless, because then it could not be Faith; nor the Faculty of Reason neither, according this Preacher, whose Faith is as contrary to *Reason* as it is to *Sense*: It contains Doctrines that Reason cannot subscribe to, and Duties that Reason cannot

submit

ſubmit to. What Power or Faculty of the Soul then is it by which we muſt perceive the Objects, ſubſcribe and aſſent to the Doctrines, and ſubmit to the Duties of Faith? Why truly by the Faculty of a ſtrong and blind Perſuaſion. And thus we muſt perceive without perceiving, aſſent without rational Proofs, and receive things upon Evidence without Evidence. Here then is Faith without Faith, Reaſon without Reaſon, and a Gentleman whoſe Faith and Reaſon run exactly parallel from one End of infinite Darkneſs and Confuſion to the other. 'Tis very diverting to obſerve how in his Diſtraction he toſſes and bandies about the Word *Faith*; 'tis his whole Talent, and yet he knows not what to do with it. If you take this Word from him, he can ſay *nothing*; and if you allow him the Uſe of the Word, he can make *nothing* of it.

Now, tho' it is evident that Mr. *Bradbury's* Faith is not the Faith mentioned in his Text, but a blind implicit Creature of his own Imagination; yet it muſt be own'd that this Faith of his is a ſtronger *thing*, and capable of working much *greater Wonders*, than the Faith of thoſe Elders who obtained a *good Report*. The Elders by their Faith have ſlain their Thouſands, but Mr. *Bradbury* his Ten Thouſands. By *his* Faith he can reaſon againſt Reaſon, and maintain his Cauſe by loſing it: By *his* Faith he can prove that the moſt demonſtrative Principles of Reaſon are contrary to Reaſon; and that Reaſon can by no means aſſent or ſubſcribe to the Truth of this Propoſition, that *God cannot lye*: By *his* Faith he makes it evident that God may reveal Contradictions, and

yet that what he reveals is not reveal'd or discovered to us at all: By *his* Faith he can believe or assent to what he has not the least Idea or Conception of, and make it evident that those who have not such a Faith cannot be Christians: By *his* Faith he can prove that *Noah*, *Abraham*, and all those holy Men who believed the Promises, and obey'd the Commands of God, acted herein irrationally, or contrary to *Reason*, leaving Certainties for Uncertainties, and chusing a lesser Good in opposition to a greater: By *his* Faith he builds Christianity upon the Ruins of natural Religion, and sets the Doctrines of the Gospel in opposition to the eternal immutable Laws of God and Reason; and by the Power of this Enthusiasm he can secure to himself Wisdom without Ideas, Certainty without Knowledge, Truth without Evidence, and Faith without Judgment or Discretion: In short, by *his* Faith he can do every thing, whether it is possible or impossible; believe every thing, whether it is credible or incredible; and say any thing in the World, whether it be evidently true, or evidently false.

But I shall now take a little more particular notice of the Instances he brings from Scripture, and the Application he makes of them to the four grand Articles of his Creed already mention'd; from whence it will plainly appear that I have not fixed the Ridicule upon him without sufficient Reason.

To shew that Faith is an Obedience to unreasonable Commands, or to such Commands as Reasons cannot comply with, he begins with quoting a Part of our Saviour's Discourse in

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the 6th of *John*, where he talks ſo much of the Neceſſity of eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood, in order to eternal Life; declaring that his Fleſh *is* Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed; that he is the true Bread which came down from Heaven, of which whoſoever eateth ſhall never die; with much more to the ſame purpoſe. It muſt be evident to any one who will but look into the Account, that thoſe carnal *Jews* who took offence at this Diſcourſe, having no Thought or Concern about any thing but their Bellies, and being too ſtupid to conſider any thing of an abſtract ſpiritual Nature, underſtood our Saviour all along in the groſs literal Senſe; and from hence they concluded, that if they were to ſubſiſt only upon this Man's Fleſh and Blood, they muſt needs be ſtarved: Upon which they went away in great Haſte and Paſſion, to look for ſome better Maintenance, without giving our Saviour any proper Opportunity of rectifying their Miſtake. Now Mr. *Bradbury*, in order to repreſent the Doctrines of the Goſpel as abſurd and contrary to Reaſon, eſpouſes this ſtupid Error of thoſe *Jews*, as if the real Doctrine which our Saviour here preaches, had been in it ſelf as abſurd and contradictory as it muſt have been upon their miſtaken Suppoſition; and hereupon the cries out, that it was by *Faith they did the Things that were ſo aſtoniſhing*. But by his Leave, there was nothing aſtoniſhing in it but the Stupidity of thoſe carnal *Jews*, who underſtood that of a literal, which was meant only of a figurative eating and drinking; than which indeed nothing could be more aſtoniſhing, unleſs it is Mr. *Bradbury's*

Bradbury's aſtoniſhing Abuſe and Miſapplication of this Scripture-Teſtimony.

It falls out here very unluckily for him, that either this Inſtance is nothing at all to his Purpoſe, or elſe the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation is true, and a neceſſary Article of the Chriſtian Faith. If he could make out this laſt, it would indeed be exactly to his Purpoſe; and therefore I hope he will ſome time or other undertake it, in order to finiſh his Uſefulneſs, and compleat the Character of his *aſtoniſhing Faith*.

'Tis evident to me, that he can have no Reaſon in the World, upon his own Principles, to reject this Popiſh Doctrine. He cannot ſay with any *Grace*, that he rejects it becauſe 'tis irrational, abſurd, or contrary to Reaſon; for he knows very well that the moſt aſtoniſhing Abſurdities, how contrary ſoever to Reaſon or common Senſe, may yet be true, in conſequence of Revelation. If he ſhould ſay, that he rejects it not becauſe it is contrary to Reaſon, but becauſe 'tis contrary to *Faith*; this Reaſon in him muſt be ridiculous: For ſince by Faith here can only mean his own Faith, or his own Perſuaſion, this could only amount to ſay, That he rejects the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantion, becauſe he rejects it. And whenever he ſhall think fit to give any better Reaſon for it than this, I am ſure he muſt act contrary to the Nature of what he now calls *Faith*.

The next Inſtance he brings, to ſhew that Faith is exerciſed in Obedience to Commands that Reaſon cannot comply with, is the Caſe of *Noah*, who *being warned of God concerning Things not ſeen as yet, prepared an Ark, for the ſaving of his Houſe*.

God

God having reſolved to deſtroy the old World by an univerſal Deluge, declares his Purpoſe to *Noah*, favouring him in ſo extraordinary and ſignal a Manner, as to give him ſufficient Time, and direct him in the building an Ark, for the Security of himſelf and his Family; by which *Noah* was to have the Honour of being the Father of a new World, and beſides eſcaping a temporal Deſtruction, intitle himſelf to the Happineſs and Glory of Life eternal. Now Mr. *Bradbury* thinks this Command of God to be very unreaſonable, and that *Noah* acted contrary to the Light and Law of Nature in ſubmitting to it: He ſuppoſes *Noah* with very good Reaſon to argue againſt God, even while he knew it to be the Command of God; for this is eſſential to the Caſe, and enters into his very Suppoſition. Even after that God had abſolutely declared that he would drown the World, *Noah*'s Reaſon directed him, contrary to the Light of Nature, and all the Principles of Self-preſervation, to chuſe rather to periſh in the Waters, than build an Ark, if God would have vouchſafed him that Favour; for thus rationally does he ſuppoſe *Noah* to argue againſt God and Reaſon, *p.* 8. "Lord, let me not be ſo long "about it; I had better preſs the World with "Exhortations to Sobriety, Temperance, and "Godlineſs: A few moral Diſcourſes upon the "Heads of Moral Virtue may do 'em ſome "Good. If I muſt be a *Preacher of Righteouſ-* "*neſs*, the moſt likely way to win them is by "Sermons about Natural Religion; but the "building of an Ark will appear to them ſo "extravagant and whimſical, that after I have "touch'd the Hammer, they will heed nothing "that I can ſay." Here

Here Mr. *Bradbury*, having made *Noah* talk like a Fool, or a Madman, appeals to his Audience, as he now does to the World, whether this must not have been reckoned a mighty fine rational Harangue. As rational doubtless as Mr. *Bradbury*'s Faith, *i. e.* quite contrary to Reason. Had *Noah*'s Reason been the same with *our Preacher's*, he must have perished with the rest of the World, and have chosen Destruction for fear of being laughed at. For supposing it ever so reasonable in *Noah*, to conclude that the World would laugh at him, and disregard his Preaching; yet still he must think them very sottish and unreasonable for so doing, and it must appear reasonable for him to provide for his own Security. And whatever might be the Consequence of *Noah*'s building the Ark, with respect to the Laughter and Ridicule of the World about him, I verily believe the World could not then have laugh'd at *Noah more*, than they will now at Mr. *Bradbury* for these Irradiations of his natural Light.

Noah acted upon this eternal unchangeable Principle of Reason, *That God cannot lye.* Upon this rational Ground of Truth, his Understanding or Reason assented to what God had declared; and so he built an Ark upon the Principle of Self-preservation, which I hope is a Principle of Reason: And therefore Mr. *Bradbury*, when he comes soberly to bethink himself, must restore Reason to its Use and Office in Matters of Revelation; or else *Faith*, I mean the Christian *Faith*, is as inevitably lost and gone, as the People who perish'd in the Deluge.

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I cannot let it pass here without a Remark, that Mr. *Bradbury* speaks of *Noah*'s preaching Sobriety, Temperance, and Godliness to the World, with an Air of Ridicule; as if this had been the least part of *Noah*'s Business as a *Preacher of Righteousness*, and a Thing about which he ought to have been very little concern'd. But what does this Enthusiast think that *Noah* was to preach to the World? Why perhaps he imagines that his main Business was to preach the *Righteousness* of modern Orthodoxy, the *Antinomian* Scheme of Justification, the Necessity of Faith without Reason, and other such like Absurdities, contrary to the Light and Law of Nature. But because no such Doctrines are yet reveal'd, at least with respect to the Dispensation of that Time, Mr. *Bradbury* will perhaps be thought to have ridicul'd himself, if he does not befriend the World with what may have been communicated to him by immediate Revelation upon this Affair.

'Tis evident that the adorable Perfections of God himself, for which we especially love and praise him, are moral Perfections: And that the Conformity of our Mind to this moral Rectitude of the divine Nature, is the very essential constitutive Happiness and Perfection of every intelligent Being. Even Faith in Christ is of an inferiour Nature to this, as being only the Means to obtain it; and therefore St. *Paul* declares *all Faith* to be inferiour to *Charity*. Yet this Godliness, or moral Conformity of our Hearts and Wills to the Nature and Will of God is what this *Believer*, this truly primitive *Saint*, laughs at, and despises, in comparison

pariſon to his blind unreaſonable *Faith*. The inward moral Conformity and Obedience of the Heart and Conſcience to the Will of God, may be the Religion of *Deiſts*, *Socinians*, *Arians*, and all Hereticks, as it was certainly the Religion of our Saviour himſelf; but this it ſeems is what our *Preacher of Righteouſneſs* has very little to do with.

The next Inſtance produced to prove the Oppoſition and Inconſiſtency betwixt Faith and Reaſon, is the Caſe of *Abraham*, who was ſo blind and unreaſonable, as to believe in God, and follow him up and down the World *he knew not whither*; by which Conduct, in the account of this *Believer*, *Abraham* acted contrary to all the Dictates and Principles of Reaſon, by leaving Certainties for Uncertainties. What he offers under this Head, is ſo ridiculous a Banter upon common Senſe, that I ſhall only Anſwer it by putting a parallel Caſe.

Suppoſe then ſome great and good Man, tho' he be not omnipotent and omniſcient, as his *Grace of Canterbury* for Inſtance, or any other, ſhould engage his Word and Honour to Mr. *Bradbury*, that if he would go a little Way with him, and follow his Directions from Time to Time, he would be ſure to protect and take Care of him, and at length bring him to a Place where he would ſettle upon him, under Hand and Seal, 1000 *l. per Ann.* and at the ſame time ſecure to him the Inheritance in Reverſion of one of the beſt Royalties in the Kingdom; muſt it not be very unreaſonable now in Mr. *Bradbury*, (who has a handſome Maintenance already) to accept of ſuch an Offer as this, and thereby leave a Certainty

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for an Uncertainty, and dance about after his *Grace* of *Canterbury* no one knows whither? And if it would be unreaſonable in this Caſe, when there is no more than a human Security, doubtleſs it muſt be much more unreaſonable, where the Promiſe is ſuppoſed to be from God himſelf, and the Security and Reward infinitely greater.

As to *Abraham*'s offering up his Son, which is another Inſtance he gives, *p.* 11, it is evident that in this Caſe *Abraham* proceeded upon the higheſt and beſt Security that could poſſibly have been given to his Underſtanding or Reaſon, even the ſure infallible Word and Promiſe of God. He knew that *what God had promiſed he was alſo able to perform.* He knew that God could have rais'd up his Son again from the Dead; and even in that Caſe as eaſily have made good the Promiſe, as if he had never been ſlain. Upon this rational Security *Abraham*'s Obedience was equally an Act of Faith and of Reaſon, and any Man in the like Caſe, who would have exerciſed his *Reaſon*, * and not have judged by *Senſe* or *Paſſion*, muſt have acted in the ſame manner; tho' at the ſame time, to have acted thus without the like Security, only upon a ſtrong blind Perſuaſion, would not been a *rational Faith*, but Enthuſiaſm. But our Preacher declares, that this Caſe of Obedience *is more incomprehenſible to human Reaſon than any Myſtery that ever was reveal'd in the Old Teſtament or the New.* How a thing that is incomprehenſible to human Reaſon ſhould be *reveal'd*, and *diſcover'd* to human Underſtand-

* Λογιζόμενος. *Heb.* 11. 19.

ings,

ings, is a Myſtery which Mr. *Bradbury* or ſome Body elſe for him would do well to *reveal*. However, if this Caſe of *Abraham*'s Obedience be the greateſt of Myſteries, I hope he will never more blame his Adverſaries for denying Myſteries. But let him pretend what he will, he is himſelf the greateſt *Myſtery* of all.

Here Mr. *Bradbury* was come to *Ne plus ultra*; for tho' he goes on upon the other three Articles of his Creed, yet he offers not one Word of Proof beyond what has been already conſidered. And having ſo fully opened himſelf at the very Entrance, he might be reaſonably excuſed from ſaying more in ſo plain a Caſe.

Now from all this, I think it muſt be plain that what he has proved is the quite contrary to what he pretended to prove from all the Inſtances he has produced. It evidently appears, that *the Religion of thoſe Patriarchs, whoſe Names are collected into the Rolls of Faith*, was ever a rational Religion, and this in the *only Senſe that the Word is now uſed* or ever has been uſed *among us*; and the World will now ſee what Mr. *Bradbury* has got by uſing the *Word* in any *other Senſe*. Had he pretended to prove that Faith is irrational or contrary to Reaſon, becauſe the Earth revolves about its Axis, or becauſe Graſs grows upon the Tops of Houſes, it had been more excuſable; for this, tho' it could not have proved the Thing, would not however have infer'd the contrary. But when a Man, in order to prove *one Thing*, ſhall bring Arguments and Inſtances which all evidently demonſtrate the quite *contrary*, 'tis a ſhrewd Sign of his *ſore Diſtreſs*, and that he is under ſome unhappy Neceſſity of ſinking and betraying his *own Cauſe*.

Mr.

Mr. *Bradbury* having made it out, in his way, that Faith is contrary to Reaſon, and that the Chriſtian Revelation ſtands in direct oppoſition to the Light and Law of Nature; he proceeds to apply this important Doctrine to the *Revolution*, and the *Hanover Succeſſion*. And here I think, the Sum of his Application plainly amounts to this; that he ſhould have liked King *William* well enough for his Faith and Prayers, if he had fought the *Battels* of the *Lord*, as ſucceſsfully as he did *thoſe* of the *Nation*: But for want of this, the *Revolution*, by Means of a Toleration, brought in a Torrent of *Arminianiſm*, and even of *Socinianſm*, upon us; and, what is ſtill worſe, the *Hanover Succeſſion*; by which this *Arminianiſm* has been heightened and nouriſhed up into *Arianiſm*. Dr. *Burnet*, how good a Friend ſoever he might be to his Country, muſt certainly have been a Traitor to God and Religion; for this great Divine and Politician, was likewiſe a great Prophet, and foreſaw very well the diſmal Conſequences of ſettling the Crown upon the Houſe of *Hanover*, viz. that by an impartial Adminiſtration of Juſtice, and an equitable Liberty of Conſcience, Darkneſs, Confuſion, and implicit Faith, would be boldly ſtruck at; Reaſon, Light and Evidence ſet up in Matters of Religion; and the *Truth* hereby left deſtitute of its only effectual Arms of Defence, that is, *Myſtery*, *Perſecution*, *Penal Laws*, and the *Terrors of this World*.

This aſpiring Believer, illuminated with thick Darkneſs, having been baſely rejected as the Tool of *one Party*, plainly diſcovers an Inclination, if he might but be thought worthy, to be the Tool of *another*. Time

was, when the Diſſenters honoured him with their Acclamations and Applauſes, as thinking him a very proper Champion to be ſet againſt Dr. *Sa——l* and *Luke M——rn.* But now having no farther Occaſion for him upon that Score, they ungratefully forget all his noble Exploits, and great Services for God and his Country. Could any Man in *England* beſides Mr. *Bradbury*, in that Hour of Diſtreſs, have brandiſhed the Sword of the Spirit in ſuch a manner, as to make ſome People ravingly *Mad*, and others as extravagantly *Merry*? Could any one but himſelf ſo patly and pertinently have apply'd all the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament to the Downfall and Deſtruction of the *French* King and our *Tory* Miniſtry? And can we be ſecure that we ſhall never more ſtand in need of ſuch an Advocate? May not the Days of Darkneſs and Tribulation return upon us when we are leaſt aware, and our Feats once more ſhiver us over the Brink of Ruin? And O! what ſhould we not then give for *one Bradbury!* to ſtand in the *Gap*, to make up the *Breach*, to ſtrike our Enemies dead with *harmleſs Thunder*, and to imploy all the Powers of his *mighty Faith* in the Defence of our Religion and Liberties!

I hope therefore, the Gentlemen who are in the Diſſenting Intereſt will conſider what they do, and bethink themſelves before they part with Mr. *Bradbury*, whether they ſhall be able to ſupport the Cauſe without him. If he ſhould in good earneſt turn againſt them, and let them drop, what would become of them? He would make them publick Examples of Virtue, true Religion, and good Senſe; he would expoſe them

them as Traitors to Myſtery and Perſecution, and as the vile Supporters of Chriſtian Liberty, and a rational intelligible Faith: He would fly in their Faces with Calumny and Scandal, and attack them with all the incomprehenſible invincible Artillery of unmeaning Sounds. And what Power ſhall skreen them againſt ſuch Vengeance? O! where will they be found, when he ſhall clothe *himſelf* with *Darkneſs*, and his *Adverſaries* with *Shame?*

But after all, methinks a Man, who has driven Matters to ſuch a deſperate Extremity, ſhould not be thought of much Conſequence to any Chriſtian Cauſe whatever. If I thought him under any Influence or Government, I ſhould ſtand amazed at his Friends in *London*, for ſuffering him thus to expoſe himſelf, his Party, and all Religion; ſince I am ſure, it is impoſſible to defend either the Doctrines or the Duties of Chriſtianity, upon his Principles. Can you, Gentlemen, think your ſelves honoured by a Dedication of Sermons, in which he declares the Chriſtian Doctrines to be ſuch, as *deſtroy all the natural Ideas we have of God's Juſtice?* eſpecially now he has given the finiſhing Stroke to his deſtructive Scheme, by denying Religion to be our *reaſonable Service*, and and thereby enervated and taken off the Force of all the practical Motives and Inducements of the Goſpel? The World, I imagine, will now expect it from you, that you ſhould either *Juſtify* or *Cenſure* his Conduct; and your not doing the latter, muſt certainly, all Circumſtances conſidered, be looked upon as a Mark of your Approbation.

THE GROUNDS *and* PRINCIPLES OF Chriſtian Communion, CONSIDER'D. IN A LETTER

To the Reverend

Mr. JOHN CUMMING, M. A.

Occaſion'd by his

Diſſertation concerning the Authority of Scripture-Conſequences.



The Grounds and Principles of Christian Communion consider'd;

In a LETTER to the Reverend Mr. JOHN CUMMING.

SIR,

AS you have distinguish'd me by particular Marks of your Candour and Good Will, and treated the whole Body of your Non-Subscribing Brethren with very little Ceremony; so you must, I presume, expect the same frank and plain Dealing from me, or any others who may think fit to clear themselves from your numerous Misrepresentations, and the visible

Inconſequence of your Arguments. The good Opinion I had entertained of your Capacity and Integrity, made me very impatient to ſee a Book, which, as I underſtood, was deſign'd as a full Vindication of the ſubſcribing Miniſters, and the Teſts they offered at *Salters-Hall*. I thought I might reaſonably expect from you, the Force of what could be ſaid in Defence of the Principles you had eſpouſed; and I muſt do you the Juſtice to own, that I have not been diſappointed; and that, allowing for the natural Warmth of Conſtitution, which has perhaps led you into ſome Excurſions of intemperate Zeal, I know no Man who could have managed the ſame Cauſe to better Advantage. For my own part, I can eaſily forgive you the Injury you have done me, in miſrepreſenting the plain and obvious Deſign of ſome Poſitions in the *Letter of Enthuſiaſm*; which I am willing to attribute to the wrong Impreſſions you are under, join'd with the Heat and Vigour of a natural Temper: And could you have deviſed any thing worſe to have ſaid of me than you have done, it would not have given me the leaſt Pain; ſince every one muſt allow that perſonal Reproaches, or the calling of a Man by opprobrious Names, is a very different Thing from confuting his Arguments. Thoſe who will take my Character from your Draught of it, muſt believe me to be a profane Jeſter, an inſolent Libeller, a wicked inſincere Oppoſer of the clear and evident Truths of Divine Revelation, a Sceptick, a Heretick, or, in one Word, a complicated Villain. From theſe moſt unmerciful Cenſures, I appeal to the more equitable Judgment of thoſe who know

me

me better; moſt of whom, I believe, are endued with a more charitable and chriſtian Spirit, than that which you breathe in this Performance, and which I hope is not habitual to you, but rather the Effect of a preſent unuſual Ferment and indeliberate Paſſion. But the Deſign of the Trouble I now give you, is not to complain or recriminate, but to argue; and 'tis not all the Reproach that any Man's Weakneſs or Wilfulneſs may load me with, that ſhall deter me from purſuing this Controverſy, till I have either received farther Satisfaction my ſelf, or ſilenced thoſe whom I cannot but look upon as Enemies in Conſequence, tho' not in Principle, to that Liberty wherewith Chriſt has made us free. You have thought fit to ſpend about 200 Pages in a Diſſertation concerning the *Authority of Scripture-Conſequences*; and I am thus far entirely of your Mind, that the Subject you have fallen upon, is of great Importance, and ſuch as deſerves to be ſtrictly and impartially enquired into; and therefore, I muſt think it a Matter of equal Conſequence, to conſider whether what you have offered upon it has any Weight in it or no, and whether it be at all conſiſtent with itſelf, with the Rights and Liberties of Mankind, as reaſonable Creatures, or with that ſole Authority and Juriſdiction of God over the Hearts and Conſciences of Men, which we all profeſs to believe. If it ſhall appear that any of the Principles which you have taken up, and argued from, are wholly inconſiſtent with the religious Rights and Liberties of Mankind, as they are ſubject to God alone in Matters of Conſcience and eternal Salvation, I doubt not but you will be ready to retract them

upon

upon ſufficient Evidence; but if the contrary ſhall appear to you, after all that I can ſay, I preſume that common Diſcretion, as well as Charity to my ſelf and others, will induce you to uſe your farther Endeavours for my better Information. I ſhall not enter into a particular Detail of the Matters debated betwixt your ſelf and thoſe other Gentlemen with whom you are engaged, becauſe I would not preſume to take the Management out of better Hands; who as they are ſufficiently capable of doing themſelves Juſtice, ſo they will not doubtleſs be wanting in their own Defence. But, to make as ſhort as poſſible with the Controverſy, with Regard to my own intended Share in it, and to ſhew the Weakneſs and Inſufficiency of what you have advanced, and of the Application you have made of it, I ſhall endeavour to prove theſe Two Things.

Firſt, That in this whole Buſineſs concerning the *Authority of Scripture-Conſequences*, you have proceeded upon a wrong Principle.

Secondly, That ſuppoſing the Truth of the Principle, yet your Deductions therefrom are utterly inconcluſive, and ſuch as cannot in the leaſt ſerve to ſupport the Cauſe you have undertaken to defend.

Now, to clear the Way to what follows, and that I may not jumble, as I think you have done, Heaven and Earth together, I muſt here diſtinguiſh betwixt Principles of Reaſon and Principles of Revelation; or, which amounts to the ſame Thing in the Caſe before us, betwixt Natural and Reveal'd Religion.

And ſince the Scripture is a compleat Syſtem of Natural as well as Reveal'd Religion, it muſt contain

contain the Principles and Truths of both theſe Kinds: Tho' it is evident that theſe two Ranks or Claſſes of Principles, are in themſelves *toto genere* diſtinct, as being entirely different from each other in their Nature, Original, and Manner of Conveyance to the Mind; yet this Diſtinction, how neceſſary ſoever it may be to any clear or juſt Reaſoning upon the Subject now under Conſideration, is uſually overlook'd by thoſe who argue in groſs, and are willing to take Things for their own Advantage by Wholeſale.

Now ſince you have thought fit to entertain the Publick with a long and laboured Diſcourſe concerning *Scripture-Conſequences*, without diſtinguiſhing between the two different Claſſes or Kinds of Truth contained in Scripture; it may not be amiſs to conſider briefly what Principles are, and what are not, capable of affording Conſequences and Concluſions of the ſame Kind, in a Way of rational Deduction, which ſhall be diſtinct from the Principles themſelves: And I ſay that the Mind of Man, in this Act of rational Deduction or Inference, muſt be confined wholly to Principles of Reaſon, as contradiſtinct from Matters of Faith, or ſuch Propoſitions and Truths as muſt depend entirely, as to us, upon Teſtimony; and that no Propoſition or Truth, as a Matter of Faith, can be derived by any rational Deduction or Inference whatever, from any other Propoſition or Principle of the ſame Kind.

In Matters of Science, the Principles and Truths of each diſtinct Claſs or Order, have a neceſſary Connexion with and Dependance upon each other in the Nature and Reaſon of Things;

Things; ſo that the Mind can proceed either from the firſt Principles to the laſt Concluſions, or back again from the laſt Concluſions to the firſt Principles, in clear and evident Deductions of Reaſon.

That Man is an intelligent Agent under the Moral Government of God, as the Supreme Independent Firſt Cauſe of all Things, is a firſt Principle in rational Morality or Natural Religion; and nothing can be admitted into this Claſs or Order of Truths, but what has a neceſſary Connexion with and may be derived from or reduced to this firſt Principle, by clear and evident Deductions of Reaſon. That the Sides oppoſite to the equal Angles in ſimilar Triangles are reſpectively proportional, is a firſt Principle in the Mathematicks; and there is no Concluſion in that whole Science, how diſtant or remote ſoever, but what by a right Management may be connected with this Principle by a Train of intermediate Ideas; every one of which ſhall have a ſelf-evident Connexion with its next antecedent and ſubſequent Idea. Again, that all Fluids preſs undiquaque or equally in all Directions, and that their Preſſures are in a Ratio compounded of their Gravities and perpendicular Altitudes, is a Principle in Hydroſtaticks; with which all the other Principles and Concluſions of that Science are neceſſarily and inſeparably connected in the Nature and Reaſon of Things. And thus alſo that Bodies can move only as they are moved or acted upon, and that the Motion communicated muſt be proportional to the moving Force, and in the ſame given Direction with it, is a Principle in Mechaniſm; with

which

which all other Truths of that Kind muſt be inſeparably connected in the Nature and Reaſon of the Things themſelves, abſtracted from the Conſideration of any poſitive Inſtitution or Teſtimony whatever. And this is in ſhort the Caſe in all Matters of Science, in which the Mind by Ratiocination is capable of acquiring any ſtrict or proper Certainty, as diſtinct from bare Opinion, Belief or Perſwaſion. In Matters of an intermediate Nature, which depend as far as we can underſtand them upon probable Appearances of Reaſon, but cannot be reduced to this State of Science, nor determined by any clear, expreſs and unexceptionable Teſtimony, Men may indeed make their Gueſſes or Conjectures about them in the beſt Manner they can, and form particular Opinions and Judgments concerning them; which will be more or leſs ſatisfactory, according to the different proportional Weight and Appearance of Evidence on that Side to which the Judgment is determined. In theſe Matters of mere rational probable Conjecture and Opinion, where Religion is not concerned, I muſt do Mankind the Juſtice to own, that they have been hitherto pretty well agreed in permitting a Diverſity of Sentiments, and in making proper Allowances for Mens different Apprehenſions and Capacities, as well as for the different Helps and Advantages they are furniſhed with. But tho' it might be difficult perhaps to determine all the Cauſes of it, yet ſo it is in Fact, that when ſuch Conjectures and doubtful Opinions are brought into Religion, and made Matters of Faith, the Zealots of all Parties immediately take Fire, and ſet up with all the Clamour

and

and Outrage in the World for infallible Certainty, and their being actually in the Right, in Oppoſition to all others; whilſt no ſober diſintereſted By-ſtander could have much Reaſon to conclude them in their right Senſes, and whilſt thoſe who diſcover the moſt intemperate Zeal, and make the lowdeſt Outcry, are viſibly ſuch as underſtand leaſt of the Matters in Debate. I know not whether any Thing I can ſay may be ſufficient to check this Madneſs, or to bring Men to a better Temper; but I hope to prove, in Oppoſition to what you have advanced to the contrary, that in Matters of Faith the Caſe is quite different from what I have ſhewn it to be in Matters of Science; and that it is impoſſible in any Caſe, by any Reaſoning whatever, to draw diſtinct reveal'd Conſequences or Concluſions from reveal'd Principles. It muſt, I ſuppoſe, be evident to every Body that will be at the Pains of conſidering it, that all Propoſitions which are ſtrictly ſpeaking Matters of Faith, and depend upon Teſtimony, muſt be independent among themſelves, and can have no neceſſary Connexion with or Dependence upon each other in the Nature and Reaſon of Things: For where a Propoſition contains a Matters of Faith, and depends wholly upon Teſtimony, whether Divine or Human, or both, if we take away that Teſtimony, the neceſſary Means of conveying it to our Minds, and the whole Reaſon and Foundation of our believing it, muſt ceaſe; and this being equally true of all Propoſitions of that ſort, it is plain they muſt all equally depend upon the ſame common Teſtimony, and have no neceſſary natural Connexion with, or Dependence on, each other, in the Reaſon of Things:

Things: And to ſay otherwiſe, would be to make them Matters of Science, and thereby to deſtroy the firſt Suppoſition of their being Matters of Faith, and depending upon Teſtimony.

Every one who underſtands any thing of the Nature of Reaſoning, and drawing diſtinct Concluſions from antecedent Principles, or arguing from Things given to Things ſought, muſt know, that the ſole Foundation of this Act of the Mind, is that mutual Connexion and Dependance on each other, which ſome Propoſitions and Truths have in the Nature and Reaſon of Things. Now ſince I have ſhewn that in Matters of Faith, the Truth of which depends wholly, as to us, upon Teſtimony, there is not and cannot be ſuppoſed to be any ſuch mutual Connexion or Dependance in the Nature and Reaſon of the Things themſelves; and ſince alſo you have profeſſedly confined your ſelf in this Argument to Mattters of Faith, as contradiſtinguiſhed from rational Morality, or to Reveal'd as diſtinct from Natural Religion; it muſt from hence follow, that you have proceeded in this whole Affair upon a manifeſtly wrong Principle, and advanced your Reaſon to an Office, which it is by no Means capable of. You will ſay perhaps, if this be ſo, what then becomes of Reaſon in Matters of Faith? Muſt we in thoſe Matters lay aſide our Underſtandings and Reaſoning Faculties, and believe Things without any rational Ground or Evidence at all? No, Sir, by no Means; for tho' there is no Room in Matters of Divine Faith for Men to make New Revelations, under a Pretence of explaining the Old, or of drawing diſtinct reveal'd Concluſions from reveal'd Principles, yet there

there is ſtill Ground enough for the Exerciſe of Reaſon about Matters of Faith; and indeed there would be a plain Neceſſity for it, if it was only to diſcover the Weakneſs of ſuch Reaſonings as yours. But, I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew what is the Uſe, and the only Uſe, that can be made of Reaſon in Matters of Divine Revelation: And here I ſay, that the Exerciſe of Reaſon about thoſe Matters muſt be confined intirely to theſe two Things. Firſt, it is by the Exerciſe of our Underſtandings and Reaſon that we muſt inform our Judgments whether there is any ſuch Thing as a Revelation from God made to Mankind or no; and particularly whether the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament are ſuch a Revelation. Secondly, it is by employing our Underſtandings and Reaſon about the eſtabliſh'd Signification of Words, and applying the obvious Rules of Interpretation, that we muſt determine the particular, original and genuine Senſe or Meaning of the Propoſitions in which the Revelation is expreſs'd or convey'd to our Minds; after the ſame Manner that we come at the Senſe or Meaning of all other Hiſtorians and Lawgivers, where the Facts and Laws are committed to Writing, and we cannot have Recourſe to the Revealers, or receive any clearer or more immediate Communications from the Law-giver himſelf. Where the Scripture is once received a Principle, and own'd as ſufficient to anſwer all the Ends of a Divine Revelation, the only Thing remaining, in which Reaſon can be employ'd about Matters of Revelation, is to ſettle and determine the particular, original and genuine Signification of the Words or Terms,

Terms, in which the Revelation is deliver'd, expreſs'd, and convey'd to our Minds. And this I might leave as a neceſſary Conſequence of what I have already ſaid, till it can be ſhewn that it is poſſible in any Caſe to draw diſtinct reveal'd Concluſions from reveal'd Principles. But becauſe you think you can give Inſtances of this, and ſince you have endeavour'd to exemplify your general Doctrine in particular Caſes, I ſhall now conſider what you have offer'd to this Purpoſe; and I imagine it will appear, that the clear and plain Conſequences from Scripture Principles, which you every where talk of, and inſiſt ſo much upon, are either the very Principles themſelves, and no diſtinct Concluſions from them, or falſe Inferences, and in Reality no Conſequences at all. One Inſtance which you very much inſiſt upon to this Purpoſe, by repeating it in ſeveral Parts of your Book, is *that* of our Saviour's proving againſt the *Sadduces* the real Exiſtence of the Dead in a ſeparate State, by an Original Teſtimony out of their own Law. For the *Sadduces* it ſeems deny'd the Reſurrection upon this Ground, that they did not believe any ſeparate Exiſtence of Perſons in the State of the Dead; but ſince God had ſaid, I am the God of *Abraham*, and the God of *Iſaac*, and the God of *Jacob*, when the Perſons themſelves were dead, it is plain that the Meaning of the Propoſition muſt be, that the Perſons then exiſted; for he that ſays God is the God of the Dead, muſt by the Dead here mean Perſons really exiſting, or elſe the Propoſition can have no Senſe or Meaning at all. God had ſaid after the Death of the Perſons, *I am*, and not,

I was, the God of Abraham, *&c.* from whence 'tis evident that our Saviour here urges an expreſs Scripture Teſtimony againſt the *Sadducees*. For ſhould any one deny that Perſons actually in the Favour of God do actually exiſt, you could not prove the Thing by any one intermediate Idea, ſo as to make out the Connexion plainer than it is in it ſelf; unleſs the Tranſpoſition of Words only, or the bare Sound of an *Ergo*, be ſufficient to make a Conſequence, without regarding the Order and Connexion of Ideas, or the Operations of the Mind about them. I know ſome People ſet up for deep Logicians, merely by ſhewing they can draw what they call diſtinct Conſequences from any given Principles, without advancing one Step beyond the Principle it ſelf. To let us ſee with what Clearneſs and Strength of Reaſon you draw Scripture Conſequences, you exemplify your Doctrine farther, *p.* 87. in this Syllogiſm.

He that made All Things is God.
Jeſus Chriſt is he that made All Things.
Therefore Jeſus Chriſt is God.

That Jeſus Chriſt is God the Son, Begotten of God the Father, and that God the Father made All Things by Jeſus Chriſt, the Scripture plainly declares; tho' this is what you have not proved by Conſequence. But to ſhew in how trifling and indeterminate a Senſe you make uſe of the Word *God*, give me Leave to argue, upon your own Principles, thus:

He that made All Things is God the Father.
Jeſus Chriſt is he that made All Things.
Therefore Jeſus Chriſt is God the Father.

I ſhall undertake at any Time to prove, againſt whatever you can ſay to the contrary, that this,

this, in your Scheme, muſt be as juſt and neceſſary a Scripture Conſequence, as any one of them all. Or thus:

The One True God is the God and Father of Jeſus Chriſt.

But Jeſus Chriſt is the One True God.

Therefore Jeſus Chriſt is the God and Father of Jeſus Chriſt.

The Major Propoſition is Scripture, and the Minor is your own. But to ſhew that you can prove the ſame Thing more Ways than one, you go on to ſyllogize thus:

There is but One God.

The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghoſt is God.

Therefore theſe Three are One God.

If you here uſe the Word *God* preciſely in the ſame Senſe as apply'd to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt; if you have not one diſtinct determinate Idea, when you uſe theſe different Sounds, as I imagine you have not, your Argument muſt ſtand thus:

There is but One God.

But God is God, God is God, and God is God.

Therefore God is One God.

If you can ſhew that I have abuſed you in this Way of repreſenting your Arguments, and that there is any one ſingle determinate Idea in your Account, that is not in mine, and in the very ſame Order; I ſay, if you can make this appear, I doubt not but you will think your ſelf obliged to do it in the Juſtification of your Logick. You may be apt to make mere Verbal Diſtinctions in this Caſe, as you have done already; you will diſtinguiſh (for Inſtance) be-

tween a Thing's being the ſame ſubſtantially, and perſonally, or eſſentially and ſubſiſtentially; and you will ſay, upon Occaſion, when Neceſſity drives, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, tho' one Subſtance, are yet three Perſons. But when you are call'd upon tell us what you mean by the Word *Perſon*, as you here uſe it, you endeavour to explain one Unintelligible Term by another, and ſubſtitute the Word *Subſiſtence* in the Room of *Perſon*: And when you are farther urged to explain what you intend to ſignify by three Subſiſtences in one Subſtance, you can ſay nothing, but that you make uſe of theſe Words for want of more fit or proper Terms. And thus you would by all Means ſeem to ſay ſomething when you have nothing to ſay, and labour to conceal the plain Truth, which is, that you have no Meaning at all to your Words. But I beſeech you do not caſt a groundleſs Reflection upon our Language, and all the Languages you are acquainted with, as if you had ſome Ideas in your Mind which you can find no Words to expreſs, ſo as to convey them to the Minds of others. In other Matters, where you have really any Ideas at all, you do not appear ſo much at a Loſs for Words; and the plain Truth is, as every one muſt ſee, however you endeavour to diſguiſe or conceal it, that you want not Words to expreſs your Ideas, but Ideas to affix to your Words. You had as good therefore come to a frank and open Confeſſion, that you talk about you know not what, and that in Truth you underſtand nothing at all of the Matter. Be free and ingenuous if you pleaſe, and let the World know

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how much they are obliged to thoſe who ſet up for the Orthodoxy of Sounds without Ideas, and who would perſwade Men that 'tis damnable Hereſy to underſtand the Scriptures. For your own Part, as you have now mended your Scheme, and declared againſt any eternal Generation of the Son of God whatever, whether Voluntary or Neceſſary, you have hereby plainly embraced the the fundamental Principle of *Socinianiſm*; and herein I think you have given up all poſſible Accounts of a Trinity. I am ſenſible that you may ſtill ſeem to bear off from *Socinianiſm* in ſome verbal Diſtinctions, and Sounds of no Signification; but I here challenge you to lay down any one ſingle intelligible Propoſition, expreſſive of any real Difference betwixt your Orthodoxy and real *Socinianiſm*. If you can now ſhew that you are ſtill a Trinitarian in reality, and not barely in Words, I will admire your Skill, *& eris mihi magnus Apollo.* If you cannot, I hope your next will appear in a more Charitable and Chriſtian Strain.

What has been ſaid may I think be ſufficient to ſhew that you have proceeded upon a wrong Principle, in ſuppoſing that Matters of Faith are capable of yielding diſtinct Conſequences in a Train of rational Deductions, as is the Caſe in Matters of Science; and that the Inſtances you have given of it are not at all to your Purpoſe, and moſt egregious trifling. But I ſhall now, for the Argument's ſake, ſuppoſe the Truth of your Principle, and ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that even upon this Suppoſition what you have advanced is no Weight or Conſequence at all, and cannot in the leaſt weaken or injure the Cauſe you have undertaken to write againſt. The viſible

ſible and profeſs'd Deſign of your learned Diſſertation, is, the Conviction and Confuſion of thoſe who reject the real determinate Senſe of Scripture, and ſtick to the bare Words only, abſtracted from their Meaning, and who will not receive or own the moſt evident and neceſſary Conſequences from any Scripture Principles. Theſe are your Adverſaries, or you have none at all; and if you cannot produce the Perſons, and prove the Charge upon them in another Manner than you have yet done, I believe it muſt appear to the whole World that you are here fighting without an Adverſary, and that you have taken Pains only to deſtroy a Creature of your own Imagination. You charge your Adverſaries with ſuppoſing or maintaining that it is ſufficient, even in ſome Matters of great Conſequence, barely to believe the Words of Scripture as abſtracted from their Meaning. I muſt here call upon you to name the Men, among any of thoſe you are writing againſt, who maintain that ſuch a Belief, which is really no Belief at all, is yet ſufficient to denominate a Man a Chriſtian, or to anſwer any one Purpoſe of Religion. If you can produce the Perſons, I muſt remit them to the Care of thoſe whoſe Buſineſs it is to cure Madmen; if you cannot, you are only trifling, and falſely accuſing your Brethren in a Matter of the higheſt Importance. I think every one muſt allow, that it is ſufficient to believe the Scriptures to be the certain infallible Word of God, and to underſtand them in the right Senſe as far as we are capable, tho' we may not be able to fix or ſettle that determinate Senſe of Scripture in ſome doubtful or diſputable

table Caſes, which a warm zealous Dogmatiſt may inſiſt upon as very clear and evident, or even as neceſſary to Salvation.

By your determinate Senſe of Scripture, and evident Conſequences from Scripture Principles, you muſt mean either that Senſe, or thoſe Conſequences, which cannot but appear clear and evident to the Underſtandings of all ſincere Chriſtians, or to all who make a right Uſe of their Faculties, and a due Improvement of the Helps which God has put into their Hands; or elſe that Senſe, and thoſe Conſequences, which appear clear and plain to your own Underſtanding, without any Regard to the different Underſtandings, Capacities and Circumſtances of others. One of theſe, I ſuppoſe, you muſt mean by what you ſo much inſiſt upon; for I hope you do not talk of a determinate Senſe, and clear and plain Conſequences as abſtracted from all Underſtandings. If by the determinate Senſe and evident Conſequences of Scripture Principles, you mean that Senſe and thoſe Conſequences, which cannot but appear determinate, clear and evident to the Underſtandings of all ſincere Chriſtians; I muſt here call upon you to name the Perſons among any of thoſe you are writing againſt, who reject any ſuch determinate Senſe of Scripture, or any ſuch clear and neceſſary Conſequences from Scripture Principles. If you can name the Perſons, and prove the Charge, I will pity the Men, and deteſt their Hypocriſy; if you cannot, I will deteſt ſuch Uncharitableneſs, and pity the Man that can be guilty of it.

I think it is plain, that *That* may be a clear Conſequence to one Man's Underſtanding,

which can never be ſo to another's; and that one Man may apprehend a Thing neceſſary, which another may never be able to diſcover to be ſo much as true, even while they are both equally ſincere: And before you can be qualify'd to pronounce as you do, or to paſs any ſuch definitive Sentence, concerning what muſt or muſt not be clear or evident to the Underſtandings of all ſincere Chriſtians, you muſt be perfectly acquainted with the Hearts and Conſciences of Men, with the different Degree and Meaſure of their Capacities and Apprehenſions, and the different Poſition and Situation of particular Truths to their Underſtandings; you muſt be well apprized of the different Talents with which God has entruſted your Fellow Chriſtians, and the different Uſe and Application they have made of them; of the different Prejudices and Prepoſſeſſions they labour under, and how far and in what particular Caſes any of their Doubts and Scruples, Miſtakes and Errors, are vincible or invincible; that is, you muſt be either omniſcient your ſelf, or be able to ſhew that you are inſpired, and have particular and extraordinary Revelations from God in all thoſe Caſes.

Thus qualify'd muſt you be before you can determine any Thing concerning the Sincerity or Inſincerity of Mens Belief, while they equally profeſs to believe the ſame Scriptures as the certain infallible Word of God, and to endeavour the beſt they can to underſtand them in the right Senſe, in order to regulate their Actions thereby. I have therefore one Piece of Juſtice to demand of you, in the Behalf of my ſelf and others, which is, that you would from henceforth

henceforth ſuſpend your uncharitable and bold Determinations concerning the Hearts and Conſciences of your Fellow Chriſtians, till you are qualify'd to govern and judge the World; and when you are thus qualify'd, and can make it appear, you need not doubt but every ſincere Chriſtian will readily ſubmit to your Judgment.

But after all your uncharitable Cenſures and Antichriſtian Excommunications of Men for mere doubtful Opinions, about which Perſons of the greateſt Integrity could never agree; I doubt not but to make it appear, that theſe good Words, *true Senſe of Scripture, clear and plain Conſequences, evident Deductions from Scripture Principles*, and the the like, can ſignify nothing with you but your own Judgment or Opinion, true or falſe, right or wrong: Your own Judgment concerning the Senſe of the Scripture, is and muſt be to you the true Senſe; and for this very Reaſon, becauſe it is your own Opinion, or becauſe it appears true to your Underſtanding.

'Tis true, you appeal with great Pomp and Aſſurance, whenever you think it is for your Advantage, to the Catholick Senſe, to the Common Faith, to the General Opinion of Chriſtians, or in one Word, to the Authority of the Church. I hope you have not taken up your Opinions upon Truſt, and that you do not in good Earneſt believe implicitly as the Church believes. If this be ſo, I am ſorry for it, and wiſh you would throw off the Proteſtant Guiſe. But after all, it is plain that you have no more Regard than other Men to the Catholick Senſe, and the Common Faith, whenever they hap-

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pen to diſagree with your own Senſe and your own Faith. You have given up a Point, which has been hitherto look'd upon as a Part of the Catholick Senſe and common Faith of Chriſtians, and which has been as firmly believed and rely'd on as any One Article in their Creeds; I mean the eternal Generation of the Son of God: And why then ſhould you go about on other Occaſions to impoſe upon the Weak and the Credulous, by ſeeming to lay ſo great a Streſs upon the Catholick Senſe, or the Authority of the Church, which you are ready to part with at any time to ſerve a Turn, and which, as you muſt be ſenſible, can bear no Weight at all?

Now, take away this vain and inconſiſtent Appeal to the Catholick Senſe, or the Authority of the Church, and then the true Senſe of Scripture in your Scheme and Way of talking can ſignify nothing but your own Senſe, true or falſe; and your plain and evident Conſequences from Scripture can ſtand for nothing but your own Opinions, whether they are in reality right or wrong, clear or not clear. And ſo all that you ſay muſt in Truth terminate in this, that it is neceſſary for all Chriſtians to believe the Scripture in that Senſe which you think to be the true Senſe; and to receive and own every Thing as a clear and neceſſary Conſequence from Scripture Principles, that is ſuch in your Judgment or Opinion. But ſince you cannot pretend to any infallible Certainty in thoſe Matters, and therefore muſt own that you may be miſtaken; ſince you may be in the Wrong, and thoſe that differ from you in the Right, for any Thing you can know, or be certain of, to the contrary; I have one Piece of

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Juſtice more to demand of you, *i. e.* that you would not be quite ſo poſitive and dogmatical in your Judgments for the future, nor ſo over-forward to cenſure and condemn others, till you can be more properly and ſtrictly certain that you are not your ſelf in the Wrong; at leaſt till you can anſwer the Arguments that have been, or may farther (as Occaſion offers) be brought againſt you. 'Tis evident that your Courage has not fail'd you in this Performance, whatever the Argument has done; but if I was worthy to adviſe you, it ſhould be in the Words of *Ahab* to *Benhadad*, *Let not him that girdeth on his Harneſs boaſt himſelf as he that putteth it off.*

Now, tho' this might paſs as a full Anſwer to your whole Book, ſince what has been ſaid may be ſufficient, when apply'd to your particular Objections and Reaſonings, to reduce them to juſt nothing; yet, becauſe the ſubſcribing of Human Teſts, and the making Declarations of Faith conformable to theſe Human Standards, as neceſſary to Chriſtian Communion, as if the Holy Scriptures without theſe additional Teſts were not ſufficient to anſwer all the Purpoſes of true Religion: Becauſe this, I ſay, is a Buſineſs of great Importance, and becauſe this Plea has been lately revived among our ſelves, and proſecuted with ſo much Heat and Contention, I ſhall conſider the Matter a little farther.

It muſt I ſuppoſe be granted, that he who believes the Scriptures to be the certain infallible Word of God, and endeavours the beſt he can to underſtand them right, and to regulate his Practice thereby, is a true Chriſtian. If this be real Chriſtianity, the credible Profeſſion of it muſt be viſible Chriſtianity, or that which

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muſt give a Man a Right *in Foro Eccleſiæ* to Chriſtian Communion, and to the Benefits and Privileges of the Chriſtian Covenant, as far as they can be judged of and diſpenſed by Men.

There can be no Diſpute, I ſuppoſe, between you and me about real Chriſtianity; but the only Queſtion is, what ought to be look'd upon or regarded as a credible Profeſſion of it, ſo as to give Men a Right to the viſible Communion of Chriſtians, or to intitle them *in Foro Eccleſiæ* to the Benefits and Privileges of the Chriſtian Covenant; whether the Scriptures alone, or the Chriſtian Doctrines as expreſs'd and ſignify'd in the Sacred Writings under the infallible Guidance and Direction of the Holy Ghoſt, be a ſufficient Teſt of the Soundneſs of Mens Faith; or whether theſe alone are not ſufficient, without the farther additional Explications, Deciſions and Limitations of Fallible and Uninſpired Men? This you cannot deny to be the true State of the Queſtion between the Subſcribers and Non-ſubſcribers; and I think I can ſhew that the Queſtion muſt terminate in the Sufficiency or Inſufficiency of Scripture as a Rule of Faith, and that the Matter muſt ultimately be reſolved into the grand Debate betwixt Papiſts and Proteſtants, *viz.* Whether the Church has Authority to bind the Conſciences of all its Members in Matters of Faith. If God has delegated any ſuch Authority, it is no great Matter whether he has lodged it in the Hands of the Pope, of a General Council, of a National or Provincial Synod, or intruſted it with a certain Body of *London* Miniſters. But if no ſuch Authority is committed to Fallible Creatures, I fear that

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thoſe who ſet up as Judges of Orthodoxy in the moſt diſputable, doubtful and incomprehenſible Points, and are for excluding Men from the Communion of Chriſtians and the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant, for not ſubſcribing their Fallible Human Teſts, will be found to be Enemies in plain Conſequence, tho' not in Principle, to the Religious Liberties of Mankind, and to the ſole Authority and Juriſdiction of God over the Hearts and Conſciences of Men. If I am miſtaken, I doubt not but you will endeavour to ſet me right; but I ſhall give you my Reaſons why I think the Non-ſubſcribers in the Right, and the Subſcribers in the Wrong.

1*ſt*, One Reaſon why I think the Non-ſubſcribers in the Right, and you in the Wrong, is, becauſe I apprehend it impoſſible, in the Nature of the Thing, that Fallible Uninſpired Men ſhould expreſs any Doctrine of Faith, or Divine Revelation, in Words or Terms more clear, ſignificant or unexceptionable, than thoſe in which the ſame Doctrine is expreſs'd in Scripture.

For ſince all Doctrines of this Nature, containing Facts and poſitive Inſtitutions, depending wholly upon Teſtimony, muſt be independent of each other, and can have no neceſſary Connexion or Relation among themſelves in the prior Nature and Reaſon of Things; and ſince alſo the Words or Terms by which they are expreſs'd in the Revelation it ſelf are the only natural Signs of the Ideas, or the only Means of conveying the Doctrines or Truths to our Minds; it is, I think, from hence very evident, that no reveal'd Doctrine can be more clear or deter-

determinate to us, than the Signification of the Words or Terms in which it is expreſs'd by the Revealer himſelf; and that where any Doctrine, containing a Matter of Fact or poſitive Inſtitution, is delivered in doubtful or indeterminate Expreſſions in the Original Teſtimony it ſelf, upon which alone it can depend, that Doctrine without a new Revelation muſt for ever remain doubtful and indeterminate, and no Conſequence or Deductions of human Reaſon whatever can make it otherwiſe. Now, where the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture has expreſs'd a Doctrine in Terms ſufficiently clear and unexceptionable, there can be no Reaſon for Men to put that Doctrine into other Words and Expreſſions of their own, as if they intended hereby to render it more than ſufficiently clear and unexceptionable. Perhaps you will ſay, tho' the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture has expreſs'd the Mind and Will of God in Terms ſufficiently clear to thoſe who will do what they ought to underſtand them right, yet they may be miſtaken, perverted and abuſed; and where they are ſo, they ought to be explained and limited to prevent the Growth of dangerous Errors and Hereſy. This is the common Plea; but I muſt here ask you, whether any human Deciſions and Definitions concerning the Senſe of Scripture can be ſufficiently clear to thoſe, who will not do what they ought to underſtand them right? And whether the Words of Men are not as liable to be miſtaken, perverted and abuſed, as the Words of the Holy Ghoſt? If you anſwer in the Affirmative, it muſt be then plain that your Remedy is not at all ſuited to the Diſeaſe, and that the Means

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you propoſe cannot in the leaſt tend to prevent or cure the Evil you complain of. Beſides, who ſhall explain your Explications, and define your Definitions concerning the Senſe of Scripture, which are for the moſt part more dark and obſcure than the Original Sacred Teſtimonies themſelves? But if you will ſay, that where the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture has not expreſs'd the Mind and Will of God in Terms ſufficiently clear and unexceptionable, fallible uninſpir'd Men may ſo expreſs it: This is ſaying, by a Conſequence ſufficiently clear, that Men are wiſer or more merciful than God; that they are capable of drawing Conſequences from Scripture Principles, which ſhall be clearer than the Principles themſelves from which they are drawn; and that fallible uninſpired Men can reveal the Mind and Will of God, better and more effectaally, that is, in Terms more clear, ſignificant and expreſſive, than God himſelf has done it. I cannot ſee how you will avoid theſe Conſequences, while you maintain that the Scripture is not ſo expreſs or clear, even in Things neceſſary to Salvation, but that there is ſtill need of a more clear, expreſs and definitive Teſt whereby to judge of the Soundneſs of Men's Faith in thoſe Matters, than the Scripture it ſelf, as the Holy Ghoſt has left it. It will afford you no Relief to ſay, that your human Explications and Definitions in Matters of Faith, contain the true Senſe of Scripture; for as this is only your Opinion, and you muſt own that the Opinions of others ought to have no Weight with you in the Caſe, ſo if I ſhould allow it, it could do you no Service; for you muſt ſay, if you will ſay any thing to the

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Purpoſe, that your human Declarations and Deciſions, in Matters of Faith, not only contain the true Senſe of Scripture, but that they contain it more clearly, expreſsly and definitively than the Scripture it ſelf. And while you are reſolved to talk at this Rate, you may ſay what you pleaſe about the Sufficiency of Scripture, and your receiving it as the only Rule of Faith, but every unprejudiced Perſon muſt ſee that you do in Effect, and by neceſſary Conſequence, lay aſide the Scripture as inſufficient, or leſs fit and proper, while you ſubſtitute another Rule as more expreſs and clear, and conſequently ſuperior and preferable to it. And while you will go on to maintain this greater Expreſsneſs and Clearneſs of your human Teſts and Forms of Orthodoxy, I doubt not but to make it good, againſt any thing that you ſhall ſay to the contrary, that all that additional Significancy, Clearneſs, and Expreſsneſs, above and beyond what is contain'd in the Scripture it ſelf, as the Holy Ghoſt has left it, muſt be owing either to a new Revelation, or a falſe Gloſs. And from this Conſideration alone the Non-ſubſcribers might, with great Reaſon and Juſtice, have rejected the Teſts offer'd at *Salters-Hall*, even tho' every one of them had been of your Mind, with regard to the Doctrine of the Trinity. But,

2*dly*, Another Reaſon why I cannot agree with you, concerning the Neceſſity or Expediency of ſuch human Explications and Definitions of the Senſe of Scripture, and of making Declarations of Faith which ſhall be unexceptionable conformable to them as a Rule or Standard, is, becauſe I think the Method you propoſe cannot poſſibly anſwer the End you pre-

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tend to aim at, *viz.* the preſerving the Purity of the Chriſtian Doctrine and Worſhip, by excluding from the Communion of the Church, Perſons wickedly inſincere and unſound in the Faith. On the contrary, I think I can ſhew, that your Remedy can ſerve only to fix and radicate the Diſeaſe; that it muſt, in its Uſe and Application, do infinitely more Hurt than Good, and be attended with worſe Conſequences than thoſe you endeavour to avoid. The great and popular Plea is, that *Arminians*, *Anabaptiſts*, *Quakers*, *Arians*, *Socinians*, and all the different Parties and Sectaries among Proteſtants, how erroneous ſoever, will readily ſubſcribe to the Scriptures as the only Rule of their Faith and Practice; profeſs to uſe their beſt Endeavours to underſtand them right, in order to regulate their Actions thereby; and may be alſo in all other Reſpects unexceptionably clear in their Lives and moral Conduct. If this be true, as perhaps it may, I am glad to hear it; but then let thoſe who would exclude them from Chriſtian Communion, and the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant, look to themſelves; for I would not ſtand in their Place at the Great Day, for all the Infallibility they are intitled to, or all the Temporal Emoluments and Advantages of their ſuppoſed Orthodoxy. I believe you cannot ſhew, that any of the different Parties and Perſuaſions among Proteſtants, do deny or doubt of any one Principle or Truth which the Apoſtles, and firſt inſpired Preachers of the Goſpel inſiſted on as neceſſary to Chriſtian Communion, or to conſtitute Men Members of the viſible Church, and give them a viſible Right to the Benefits of the

Chriſtian Covenant: And indeed their very refuſing to ſubſcribe your Teſts, or to make any ſuch Declaration of their Faith, as ſhall be agreeable to your Judgment and diſtinguiſhing Opinions, with their being content to bear all the Reproaches and Calumnies you can load them with for not doing it, is a clearer Proof of their Sincerity, than you can give to the contrary.

If a *Jew* ſhould now profeſs to be convinced that Jeſus is the true Meſſiah, or the great Prophet, Prieſt and King, who was to be ſent from God, to reveal his Will for the Salvation of Men; and that conſequently, he is ready to receive the New Teſtament in the beſt Senſe that he can underſtand it, and to become a Chriſtian, provided you will but ſuffer him to profeſs and practice his own Religion too, and to uſe his beſt Endeavour to convince others of the Neceſſity of joyning it with Chriſtianity, till he ſhall be convinced himſelf to the contrary; I doubt not but you would be ready to reject and exclude ſuch a Profeſſor from your Communion, together with *Quakers*, *Arians*, *Socinians*, all other Hereticks, as you would eſteem them; and yet you muſt own, that the Apoſtles, who doubtleſs underſtood the Principles of Chriſtian Communion as well as you, received the *Jewiſh* Proſelites upon thoſe very Terms, and would not ſuffer the *Gentile* Converts to exclude them their Communion, or deny them the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant, even though they were very zealous for impoſing the Obſervation of their Law as neceſſary to Salvation on the *Gentile* Converts themſelves.

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The Apoſtles, and firſt inſpired Preachers of the Goſpel, were ſo little acquainted with our modern Method of Subſcriptions, and voluminous Declarations of Faith, that they thought it a ſufficient Teſt of Mens Chriſtianity, if they profeſs'd to believe this one Article of Faith, *that Jeſus was the true Meſſiah*; ſince he who embraced this one ſingle Principle truly and ſincerely, muſt, in conſequence hereof, think himſelf obliged to examine impartially all that Chriſt has delivered as the Mind and Will of God, to endeavour to underſtand it in the beſt Senſe he can, and to regulate his Faith and Practice thereby; and he who is inſincere in this Profeſſion, may, for any Judgment that fallible Men can make of it, be equally inſincere in any other Profeſſion whatever. This was all that the Apoſtles inſiſted on in Point of Faith, when they proſelited the *Jews* to Chriſtianity, who had been before inſtructed in the Doctrine of One God: And when they preached to the Heathens, who had many Gods, they added the grand fundamental Principle of Natural Religion concerning One God, or One Supreme Independent Firſt Cauſe of all Things, to this reveal'd Principle, that Jeſus, whom they preached, was ſent from God to reveal his Will for the Salvation of Man, and was the only Mediator betwixt God and Man. But now this, or even much more, will not ſerve the Turn; for he who cannot come into all the unintelligible Cant and Scholaſtick Jargon of modern Orthodoxy, muſt expect to be condemned as an Heretick, and given to the Devil.

But after all your high Pretenſions of ſecuring the Purity of the Chriſtian Faith and Wor-

ſhip by your human Explications and Definitions of the Senſe of Scripture, 'tis evident, that your boaſted Means of Security can ſerve only to exclude ſincere Non-ſubſcribers from the Communion of the Church; while you muſt unavoidably admit into it all the wickedly inſincere and unconſcionable Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, after you have made them ſuch by the ſtrongeſt Temptations you could lay them under. Since we cannot enter into the Hearts of Men, or determine any thing about their Capacities and Advantages, or the different Improvement they make of them, with reſpect to God and their own Conſciences; I ſuppoſe it muſt be allow'd as a Rule of Judgment, that every Man has an equal Right to be believed, with regard to the Sincerity of his Profeſſions and Declarations, till he has forfeited his Credibility, either by acting apparently contrary to his own profeſs'd Principles, or by a wicked immoral Life; in which every one muſt ſtand ſelf-condemn'd, and proclaim himſelf to the whole World about him to be a Perſon of no Religion or Conſcience at all. If this Rule of Judgment is not admitted, it muſt deſtroy all Credibility of Profeſſion among Men, and leave no Body a Right to be believed in any Declaration whatever.

Now, if you will ſuppoſe that you muſt be in the right, or cannot be miſtaken about any thing that you apprehend to be neceſſary in Scripture by clear and plain Conſequence; tho' the Scripture it ſelf, by any clear, expreſs and unexceptionable Declarations, has not conſtituted any ſuch Neceſſity; and if you will alſo ſuppoſe, or take it for granted, that another who differs from you in any ſuch Caſe, muſt

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not only be miſtaken, but muſt be alſo wickedly inſincere and heretical in his Error, tho' he has not forfeited the Credibility of his Profeſſion, by contradicting it in Practice, or by any open moral Wickedneſs: If you will, I ſay, ſuppoſe theſe two Things, as you moſt evidently do; by the ſame Right, and upon the ſame Principle, that Other may, and muſt judge the ſame of you; and this moſt unchriſtian Rule of Judgment muſt go round, not only to the different and oppoſite Parties and Perſuaſions of Men, but to all the different Opinions and Sentiments which are every where to be found among Men of the ſame Communion and general Denomination. Either therefore every one has an equal Right to be believed as to the Sincerity of his Profeſſion, who has not forfeited the ſame by any open contradictory Practice, or elſe no Body can have any ſuch Right at all: which muſt equally affect your ſelf, with the reſt of Mankind, and leave you no Claim of Credence, or any Right to be believed or credited in any Profeſſion or Declaration you can make. He who embraces the Scripture in Faith and Practice, according to the beſt Senſe in which he is capable of underſtanding it, muſt, I ſuppoſe with you and me, be a real Chriſtian; and then he who profeſſes ſo to do, and has not forfeited the Credibility of his Profeſſion by any outward contrary Practice, of which Man can judge, muſt be a Chriſtian viſibly, and in the Judgment of the Church; tho' he cannot perhaps in Conſcience, or at leaſt may not think it expedient to ſubſcribe or declare his Aſſent to your Explications or Definitions of the Senſe of Scripture in

ſome diſputable Points, which may appear clear and important to you, but in which you may be miſtaken, and the other in the right: Or if he is in the wrong, may yet, for any thing you can know to the contrary, be ſincere in his Miſtake, and be readily diſpoſed to receive the Truth upon the Propoſal of ſuch Evidence as ſhall appear ſufficient to his Underſtanding.

Now this being the Caſe, it is evident from what has been ſaid, that you muſt either admit ſuch an one to the Communion of the Church, and allow him a viſible Right to the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant; or exclude him upon a Principle that will equally juſtify the Excluſion of your ſelf, or any other Perſon in the World. And as your Principle, when received and acted upon, muſt exclude from the Communion of the Church the beſt and moſt ſincere Chriſtians in the World, ſuch as I reckon thoſe to be who will be determined by nothing but the Authority of Scripture alone, and will not ſubmit to the Claim of thoſe who pretend to explain the Chriſtian Doctrines better than the Holy Ghoſt has done; ſo it muſt neceſſarily admit into it the worſt of Hypocrites, and that perhaps after you have made them ſuch by the ſtrongeſt Temptations you could lay them under: For I think there cannot be a ſtronger Temptation, or Bias upon the Mind of Man, againſt any impartial Examination of the Holy Scriptures themſelves, than to be tied down, under all the Sanctions of Time and Eternity, to certain human Explications and Definitions concerning the Senſe of Scripture; which he may underſtand perfectly well, and yet be never the nearer to the ture

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Meaning of the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture. That all thoſe Explications and definitive Declarations concerning the Senſe of Scripture, which are ſo highly cried up, and ſo much inſiſted on, are only the Opinions of fallible uninſpired Men, in which they may as poſſibly be miſtaken as not, and that they are all cloſely twiſted and interwoven with human Paſſions and the Intereſts of this World, is as evident as any thing can be of a Moral Nature: And I need not enlarge upon this Conſideration to ſhew how powerful the Temptation muſt be againſt a Man's ſtudying or examing the Scriptures at all for himſelf, when he can expect nothing but to be condemned as an Heretick, to quit the Reputation of his Orthodoxy, and for the moſt part, all the Hopes and Advantages of the preſent Life, if he ſhould happen, upon ſuch an Enquiry, to underſtand the Scripture in any other Senſe but what is already fixed and ſettled to his Hands. From hence it comes about, that the moſt Stupid and Unthinking have been always moſt Orthodox, as being moſt diſpoſed to take up with what comes firſt recommended, and ſeems attended with the greateſt Temporal Advantages; by which they can at once ſave themſelves the Trouble of examining, and avoid the Inconveniencies which are likely to ariſe from it. That this Obſervation holds good, with reſpect to the National Eſtabliſhed Orthodoxy in every Country, is evident beyond all Contradiction: And I cannot ſee how a more general Conſent can add any real Weight to any Doctrine whatever, even tho' great Numbers of very ſincere and good Men ſhould join in ſupporting it; unleſs

it be ſuppoſed that Truth muſt be determined by Suffrage, and that Error may be made ſacred by Cuſtom. I wiſh, they who ſeem to think thus, and who are ſo ready to plead common Conſent, and the Authority of the Church, where they think it for their Advantage, would but conſider, whether (upon this Principle) Chriſtianity muſt not be voted out of the World, as contrary to the general Opinion of Mankind. But, to return.

Since you ſuppoſe that they who are not of your Mind in ſome Things which you think of great Importance, muſt be wickedly inſincere in the Profeſſion of a contrary Belief; you could have no Reaſon to think them ſincere, ſhould they profeſs to be convinced, and offer to ſubſcribe your Opinion or Senſe of Scripture: For he who will be guilty of wicked Negligence in not examining as he ought, and thereby believe and profeſs what he ought not, will doubtleſs be ready, whenever he thinks it for his Advantage, without any farther Examination, to profeſs and ſubſcribe what he does not believe; and yet, as long as he will profeſs and ſubſcribe your Opinions and Senſe of Scripture, you muſt receive him, whether he be ſincere in it or not; and tho' you have perhaps tempted him to ſuch a ſinful Compliance, by worldly Hopes and Fears, and the ſtrongeſt Inducements that can be laid upon Men to act contrary to their Judgments and Conſciences. And thus, when by the direct and natural Tendency of your uſurped Authority and human Injunctions, you have made thoſe, who were before ſuppoſed to be Hypocrites only in Profeſſion, compleat Hypocrites in their whole practical

practical Conduct, you have no Means to prevent the Miſchief you have done, or to exclude ſuch worſt of Hypocrites from your Communion. But here you are ready to exerciſe that *Charity, which thinketh no Evil, which hopeth all Things, believeth all Things, and covereth a Multitude of Faults.* Here then lies the great Advantage of your Scheme! You will not receive Men into your Communion, who do not, or perhaps cannot, underſtand the Scriptures in your Senſe; but you will lay them under the ſtrongeſt Temptations poſſible to profeſs what they do not believe, and then receive them as Brethren and Fellow-Chriſtians: A hopeful Method of curing a Diſeaſe, by rendering it incurable! Find out but a ſufficient Teſt againſt Hypocriſy, or a certain infallible Criterion whereby to examine the Hearts and Conſciences of Men, and to determine clearly who are or are not ſincere, and I ſhall admire your Skill, and give into your Scheme; but while you cannot pretend to this, and yet will go on to cenſure and condemn your Brethren and Fellow-Chriſtians, for no other Reaſon but becauſe they are not of your Mind, or cannot underſtand the Scriptures in your Senſe, I can only wonder at your Preſumption, and look upon ſuch unchriſtian Behaviour with a juſt Indignation and Diſdain.

3*dly*, Such an Authority or Right in any fallible uninſpired Men to interpret or fix the Senſe of Scripture, and to enforce their Interpretations and Explications upon others, as the Conditions of Chriſtian Communion, is utterly inconſiſtent with the Right of private Judgment, and directly contrary to all the Principles and Maxims, upon which Chriſt has founded his ſpiritual Kingdom. The

The *Papiſts* are the only Men who have advanced any conſiſtent or practicable Scheme for the befooling and undoing the World, by taking the Care of every one's Soul out of his own Hands, and putting it under the Direction of thoſe who know beſt how to diſpoſe of it to their own Advantage. As they aſſert the Right of publick authoritative Interpretation, ſo they ſuppoſe this Right to be lodged in particular Hands, and that the Perſons entruſted with it are infallible; and, agreeably hereto, they deny all Right of private Judgment, and maintain their publick interpretative Authority to be indiſputable, and abſolutely definitive, or ſuch as ought finally to be ſubmitted to, without any farther Appeal. It muſt be ow'd that this Scheme is conſiſtent and practicable; for as the Infallibility of the publick Interpreters is the only Principle that can ſupport ſuch a Claim, ſo Mankind may, if they pleaſe, give up their Underſtandings and Conſciences to the Will and Pleaſure of the Pope, and blindly receive, without Examination, whatever his Holineſs, by the Advice of his Privy Council, ſhall think fit to declare as a Matter of Faith.

Thus ſtands the Caſe in the Church of *Rome*; and 'tis viſible to what wretched Shifts ſome Proteſtants are driven, while they endeavour to ſeparate the Advantages of this Popiſh Scheme from the Abſurdities of it, and think they can reconcile the Right of private Judgment with the contrary and inconſiſtent Right of publick Interpretation. Some of our Proteſtant Reformers, as Eccleſiaſtical Rulers, have thought fit to inveſt themſelves, and be complimented by

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the People, with that publick authoritative Judgment and Right of Interpretation, which they had taken from the Pope; tho', as I ſaid before, if there are any ſuch publick au horitative Interpreters of the Mind and Will of God, beſides the Apoſtles and the Sacred Inſpired Writers themſelves, it is a Matter of little Conſequence whether this Authority ſhall be lodged in the Hands of the Pope, of a General Council, of the Catholick Church, of a *Scotch* Presbytery, or an *Engliſh* Convocation; or whether, laſtly, it is entruſted with a ſelect Body of *London* Miniſters. Only thus much may certainly be concluded from thoſe different and contrary Claims, that till the Matter is ſettled, and this Right clearly and indiſputably fix'd in ſome particular Hands or other, every Man muſt be left to make uſe of his own Underſtanding and Judgment, and to determine the Senſe of Scripture for himſelf in the beſt Manner he can; ſince no one can have any Reaſon to regard thoſe as Interpreters of Scripture, who cannot agree among themſelves, either who muſt interpret, or how it muſt be interpreted. But theſe Men are ſurely driven to the laſt and worſt Extremity of all, who not daring to own any ſuch publick authoritative Right of Interpretation in any Man or Body of Men whatever, do yet in Effect claim it to themſelves, and are forced to lodge a publick as well as a private Judgment and Juriſdiction of Conſcience in every Man's own Breaſt; which muſt bring the Matter at length to this, that you cannot maintain Chriſtian Communion with any other Perſon in the World, who is of a different Opinion concerning the Senſe of Scripture

ture in any Matter, (how doubtful or diſputable ſoever) which you think to be of very conſiderable Importance; tho', for any thing you can know to the contrary, you may be miſtaken your ſelf, and the other in the right; or if he is miſtaken, he may be yet a very good and ſincere Chriſtian, and readily diſpoſed to receive the Truth upon any ſuch Evidence as ſhall appear ſufficient, not barely to your Underſtanding, but to his own. I muſt here take Occaſion to remind you, that either a Man's profeſſing to receive the Scriptures as the only Rule of his Faith and Practice, and to uſe his beſt Endeavours to underſtand them in the right Senſe, in order to regulate his Actions, where it is not contradicted by any Part of his outward viſible Conduct and Behaviour; that either this, I ſay, is a credible Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, or elſe there can be no ſuch credible Profeſſion among Men. If you will ſay, that a Man cannot be ſincere in his Study and Examination of the Holy Scriptures, where he happens to differ from you in any Thing which you apprehend to be a neceſſary and important Truth, by ſome juſt Interpretation of or clear Conſequence from Scripture; this is not only ſuppoſing the Infallibility of your own Judgment, but it is alſo ſetting up your own Underſtanding as the Rule and Meaſure of all Scripture-Truth and Orthodoxy, and making your own Judgment the Teſt and Standard of other Mens Faith and Conſciences: Or, in other Words, it is a bold Invaſion of the Prerogative of Almighty God, and a pretending to exerciſe a Spiritual and Divine Juriſdiction over the Hearts and Conſciences of your Fellow

Chriſtians.

Chriſtians. Upon this moſt wretched Principle, it will be impoſſible for the beſt and moſt ſincere Chriſtians in the World to hold Communion with one another; they muſt go on to the World's End hereticating and excommunicating each other, even where they are profeſſedly agreed in every Thing which the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture has ſufficiently defined, or expreſs'd in clear and unexceptionable Terms, as neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, and differ only in Matters of doubtful Interpretation or diſputable Conſequence; about which, thoſe who profeſs to receive the ſame Rule of Faith, and appear to be equally ſincere in examining and applying it, could never be of one Mind, and are never like to come to any Agreement. It is evident therefore, that this Principle, when received and acted upon, as it muſt lay aſide the Right of private Judgment, with all the Benefits and Advantages of it, ſo it muſt neceſſarily diſſolve and deſtroy that Charity which is the Bond of Perfectneſs, together with all that Catholick Unity and Communion of Saints, which every Chriſtian is bound under the higheſt poſſible Obligations, even the Sanctions of eternal Life and Death, to preſerve and maintain. If you will after all declare and ſtand to it, that it is not ſufficient for Men to agree in every Thing that the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture has clearly and definitively expreſs'd as neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, unleſs they agree alſo in ſome other Things of doubtful Interpretation and diſputable Conſequence; in which thoſe who appear equally to believe the Scriptures, and to be equally impartial in their Enquiries,

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could never yet, or are ever like to agree: If you will, I ſay, affirm this; I will undertake to demonſtrate, upon this moſt ſenſeleſs Principle, that the Scripture is not a ſufficient Rule of Faith; that it can ſerve only to ſet Mankind together by the Ears, to create endleſs Broils, and the moſt inhuman Diviſions; that it would be the Wiſdom and Intereſt of the Chriſtian Church and World to lay it aſide.

It will ſignify nothing to ſay, that what you inſiſt upon as neceſſary and important by clear Conſequence from Scripture, is ſo, not only in your Opinion, but in the common Opinion of Chriſtians: for the common Opinion of Chriſtians can ſerve you to no purpoſe, but to make a Show of; ſince 'tis plain, that you have no Regard at all to any ſuch Opinion, but only as it is your own Opinion. And if you will ſtand to the common Opinion of Chriſtians in all Matters alike, as you ought, or in none at all; you muſt, upon this Principle, renounce the Proteſtant Religion, or confine Chriſtianity to your own Perſuaſion: which I think is indeed the only Catholiciſm that can be conſiſtent with your Scheme. For if it is neceſſary for all Chriſtians to underſtand the Scriptures in the one only true Senſe, not only in Things which the Holy Ghoſt has expreſly and definitively determined as neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, but alſo in other Matters of doubtful Interpretation or Conſequence; and if every thing which you apprehend to be neceſſary by clear Conſequence, is really ſo, and be true genuine Senſe of Scripture; it muſt be then evident, that all Chriſtians are bound to underſtand the Scripture in your Senſe, or to

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be of your Opinion in every thing which you imagine to be a Matter of Importance. If you will abide by this, I muſt demand a Sight of your Credentials, conſtituting and appointing you the univerſal Judge and Decider of all Controverſies in Matters of Faith. When you can produce your Commiſſion, and make good your Claim upon it, I ſhall be rea dy to congratulate you on this ſignal Honour done you by the Almighty, and ſhall endeavour to let the World know to whom they are to have their Recourſe in this grand Affair: But till then, I muſt beg leave to conclude, that your ſubſtituting, as you moſt evidently do, your own doubtful Opinions and Conſequences in the room of Scripture it ſelf, and placing a publick as well as a private Judgment and Juriſdiction in every Man's own Breaſt, is directly contrary to the Proteſtant Principles, and to all the Laws and Maxims upon which Chriſt has founded his ſpiritual Kingdom.

4*thly*, The placing a Right in fallible uninſpired Men, to fix and define the general, indeterminate and doubtful Senſe of Scripture, and to enforce ſuch their Explications and Definitions upon their Brethren and Fellow Chriſtians, as Terms of their viſible Chriſtianity and Church Communion, is the great Foundation of Impoſition and Antichriſtian Tyranny, and will ſerve equally to juſtify all the Religions or religious Opinions in the Chriſtian World, that can be ſet up under a Pretext of Scripture Authority. Either the Holy Ghoſt, in Scripture, has limited and explained all Matters neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, in ſufficiently clear, expreſs and definitive Terms, or he has not: If he has, this

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Controverſy is at an end, and then we may ſafely reject all human Explications and Deciſions in thoſe Matters, as inſignificant and needleſs: If he has not, then either there muſt be a Right in ſome particular Perſons, as the Governours and Directors of Churches, to ſupply this Defect of the Holy Ghoſt, by making ſuch particular Limitations and Explications, about Matters neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, as are not made in Scripture; and to enforce ſuch their Explications upon others, as the Condition of their viſible Chriſtianity and Church-Communion; or elſe every Man, in Matters of doubtful Interpretation, or diſputable Conſequence, muſt be left to his own Judgment, without being liable to any Excommunication, Cenſure, or other Inconvenience therefrom. If the latter be the Caſe, this Controverſy is alſo at an end; ſince then all Proteſtants will be agreed in being of the ſame Opinion about all Matters, which the Holy Ghoſt, in Scripture, has clearly, expreſly, and definitively determined as neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, and in allowing a Diverſity of Opinions in the viſible Church, about other Matters of doubtful Interpretation or Conſequence. But if you will maintain, as I think you muſt, or give up the whole Cauſe, that there is a Right or Authority in ſome particular Perſons, as Governours or Managers of the Churches, to limit and explain the general and doubtful Senſe of Scripture, and to oblige others to receive, ſubſcribe, or declare their Aſſent to ſuch their Limitations and Explications of Scripture, as the Condition of their viſible Chriſtianity and

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Right to the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant: I ſay, this Principle will juſtify the enforcing the moſt different and contrary Explications of Scripture, as Conditions of Salvation and Chriſtian Communion; this Plea will be as good in one oppoſite Party or Communion as another, and will ſerve to ſupport all the Impoſition and ſpiritual Tyranny that have, or can be exerciſed, under the Colour or Pretence of limiting and explaining the general and indeterminate Senſe of Scripture: And if any Man, or Body of Men, have a Right to ſet up any particular Senſe of Scripture, as neceſſary to Salvation or Chriſtian Communion, where the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture has not expreſly and definitively determined it as ſuch; every Man or oppoſite Party of Men muſt have the ſame Right to enforce, in like manner, their own Senſe of Scripture, whatever it be. For ſince where Men are agreed in their common Principles, and differ only about the Conſequences and Application of them; and where they have no common Judge or Umpire, to whom they can appeal, and be ſatisfactorily determined, no Man can have any thing elſe to guide or determine him but his own Underſtanding and Judgment; either every Man's Judgment muſt give him a Right to ſet up his own Senſe of Scripture as a Teſt of Chriſtianity, or elſe no Man's Judgment can give him any ſuch Right at all. Perhaps you will ſay, that tho' Men may interpret the Scriptures right, and enforce the true Senſe in Matters of Importance, as neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion; yet it will not from hence follow, that they may interpret them wrong, and enforce a falſe Senſe. I ſhall allow this to be ſomething to the

purpoſe, when you can ſhew, that by right Interpretation and true Senſe, you mean any thing more than your own Interpretation and your own Senſe; or when you can make good your Title to Infallibility, and evidently prove that your own Senſe muſt neceſſarily be the true Senſe. But this Proof you have been very ſparing of; and if you had depended only upon that, you might certainly have comprehended the Argument in leſs Room. If ſeveral Perſons ſhould differ about their Title to the ſame Eſtate, and had no common Judge or Umpire to whom they could appeal and be determined; I ſuppoſe neither of them would think himſelf fairly diveſted of his Right, or cut off from his Claim, by each of the other's claiming it wholly and intirely to themſelves. This is the very Caſe between thoſe oppoſite Parties and Communions, who, being profeſſedly agreed in the Sufficiency and Perfection of Scripture, as the only Rule of Faith, and in every thing that the Scripture has clearly, expreſly and definitively made neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, and differing only about Matters of doubtful Interpretation and diſputable Conſequence, do yet go on to hereticate and excommunicate each other with equal Right and Juſtice, while they are not able to convince one another by fair Argument. If you ſay, that your Arguments are ſufficiently clear and convincing in themſelves, but that your Adverſaries are heretically perverſe and obſtinate; I muſt beg you to remember, that this is what any Man in the World may ſay, who has but Front and Aſſurance enough. If you ſhould ſtill urge, that thoſe who underſtand the

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Scriptures in the true Senſe, muſt certainly have a Right to inſiſt upon that true Senſe in Matters of Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, more than thoſe who pervert and abuſe them, by miſunderſtanding and miſapplying them; let the main Queſtion be firſt decided, who are in the right, and who are the true Interpreters of Scripture in thoſe doubtful and diſputable Points; and if it happens to fall upon you, I ſhall ſubmit to your Claim. But in the mean while, if I ſhould ſuppoſe, for Argument's ſake, that you are actually in the right; nay, that you are certainly and infallibly ſo; yet it would not yield you the leaſt Advantage, farther than you could make it evidently appear to the Underſtandings of others. For I think it is plain enough, that as Men may be ſincerely and virtuouſly miſtaken, ſo they may be very inſincerely and wickedly in the right. For as that Truth, which is quite above and beyond a Man's Capacity and Apprehenſion, can be of no Neceſſity or Importance to him; ſo no Truth can be of any avail to him, who only ſtumbles upon it in his Way to Preferment, or takes up with it as the common Opinion or ſettled Orthodoxy of his Church and Party, or barely as it comes recommended to him by Parents, Maſters, ſpiritual Guides, or whomſoever elſe he may think fit to make choice of to have an implicit Faith in. All true Religion muſt conſiſt in the inward rational Perſuaſion of the Mind, grounded upon a juſt and fair Examination; and where this is neglected, it is a Matter of little Conſequence in the Caſe of true Religion, whether a Man be in the right or in the wrong.

I fear therefore, that the Heads and Leaders of the different and oppoſite Parties among Chriſtians, and the great Fomenters of their Diviſions, will give at laſt but a poor Account of their Conduct, whilſt they have been putting out the Eyes of their Diſciples, in order to their being led about in the dark by their Maſters, deterring them as much as poſſible from reading or conſidering any thing on the contrary Side; and beating and abuſing their Fellow-Servants, who thought it better to ſee with their own Eyes, than to be put under the diſcretional Guidance of thoſe who could make the loudeſt and boldeſt Claim, and perhaps with the leaſt Right, to Truth and Orthodoxy.

The main Queſtion then here, is not, as ſome may imagine, who is in the Right, and who in the Wrong; but whether Truth can give a Man any ſpiritual Juriſdiction over another more than Error? Or, whether a Man's being actually in the Right, in any of thoſe doubtful and diſputable Points, can juſtify him in excluding another from Chriſtian Communion, becauſe he cannot ſee the Neceſſity or Clearneſs of a particular Interpretation or Conſequence, which may perhaps be true in it ſelf, and may appear to be clear and neceſſary to your Underſtanding? This Suppoſition gives your Cauſe all the Advantage it is capable of; and yet even here you cannot juſtify the excluding another from Chriſtian Communion, without uſurping that Authority and Juriſdiction over the Hearts and Conſciences of Men, which God has reſerved to himſelf.

You will ſay, that you only judge for your ſelf, as every one muſt do, whom you are to

receive to, or exclude from, Chriſtian Communion; and that this may be done without pretending to any Spiritual Juriſdiction over the Conſciences of others, unleſs the Right of private Judgment be ſaid to be ſuch a Juriſdiction. To which I reply, that the Debate here does not turn upon the Right of private Judgment, in which I ſuppoſe we are both agreed; but upon the Principle and Rule of Judgment, which you have advanced as the Ground and Meaſure of your whole Procedure, both in forming your Judgment, and in directing your conſequent Practice; and the Queſtion is, whether this Principle and Rule of Judgment will not ſerve to juſtify and ſupport all the Impoſition and Spiritual Tyranny in the Chriſtian World? I ſuppoſe you will allow, that tho' every one has a Right to judge for himſelf, yet no Body can have a Right to form his Judgment and regulate his Practice upon falſe Principles; and that nothing can excuſe or juſtify a Man in ſo doing, but invincible Error. Whether your Error is invincible or not, I cannot pretend to determine, and therefore I leave all ſuch Matters to the moſt righteous Judgment of God alone; but I think I can ſhew clearly that your Principle or Rule of Judgment is wrong, and that it will ſerve to ſupport and juſtify the Spiritual Cenſures and Excommunications of all other Parties as well as of yours. Your Principle is this, that there is a Right in fallible uninſpired Men, to fix and define the Senſe of Scripture, as neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, in Matters where the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture has not thus fix'd and defin'd it in Terms ſufficiently clear, ex-

preſs and unexceptionable. That this is the very Hinge of the Controverſy, and the Point upon which it turns, every one muſt ſee; and that this Principle ſuppoſes fallible uninſpired Men capable of making new Revelations, or of revealing the Mind and Will of God clearer, or in more ſignificant and definitive Terms, than the Spirit of God has done it, I have proved already. I am now to ſhew that this Principle, or Rule of Judgment, will juſtify all Parties and oppoſite Communions alike, in making every thing neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, which they apprehend to be the true Senſe of Scripture in any Matter which they think of ſufficient Importance.

Since it is evident in Fact that the Scripture in many Caſes is capable of different Interpretations, and that Men of equal Probity and Integrity, as far as we can judge, interpret it differently; and ſince there is confeſſedly no infallible Judge to whom they can appeal to decide their Differences; 'tis plain that no Man can have any thing elſe to guide and determine him to one Interpretation or Senſe rather than another, but his own Underſtanding and Judgment; and therefore every Man's own Judgment, and conſequently the joint Opinion of any Body or Party of Men, muſt give them a Right to make every thing neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion that they think to be ſo, or elſe no Man's Opinion or Judgment can give him any ſuch Right at all. You will ſay, perhaps, that every Man has a Right to interpret the Scriptures in the true Senſe, and to make that to be neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Com-

Communion which the Holy Ghoſt has made ſo, but no Man can have a Right to do the contrary. If by true Senſe here, you mean that which is True and Right in it ſelf, or in the Judgment of God, this in the preſent Caſe is ſaying nothing at all; for ſince what is True or Right in it ſelf, or in the divine Judgment, cannot poſſibly be known, or any ways determined, but by forming ſome human Judgment concerning it; and ſince there is no infallible Judge to decide where the Truth lies, amidſt the different Opinions and Interpretations which may ariſe among thoſe, who equally receive the ſame Scripture as the only Rule of their Faith and Practice; this muſt leave the Matter juſt where it was, and give every oppoſite Party an equal Right to eſtabliſh their own Opinions and Senſe of Scripture, as the only neceſſary Terms of Salvation and Chriſtian Communion. But if by true Senſe, and right Interpretation, you mean, as I ſuſpect you do, that which is True and Right in your own Eyes, or in your own Judgment; and conſequently that Men ought not to receive any thing as the true Senſe of Scripture, or make any thing neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, 'till they are of your Judgment or Opinion about it: If this be what you mean, you would do well to declare your ſelf frankly upon this Point, that all Parties and Communions may know where is the laſt Reſort, and to whom they are ultimately to appeal as the infallible Interpreter of Scripture, and the final Judge and Decider of all Controverſies in Matters of Faith. If you dare not abide by this, you muſt either allow your Principle, or Rule of Judgment, to hold

good univerſally, as apply'd by all Parties while they are eſtabliſhing their own Senſe and Interpretations of Scripture, in oppoſition to all others, as the only Terms of Salvation and Church Communion; or elſe you muſt give it up entirely, as utterly groundleſs and indefenſible. You are at Liberty to take which of theſe you like beſt; but both of them I think you cannot avoid. It will be to no Purpoſe, 'till you have better Evidence, to cry up as you do the Clearneſs and Plainneſs of your Conſequences; for I muſt tell you again, that all this Talk of clear and plain Conſequences, while the Matter is in Debate, and other People have not Eyes to ſee thoſe Conſequences, might come with as much Juſtice, and with as good a Grace, from a *Quaker*, or a *Muggletonian*.

And thus, *Sir*, I have given you ſome Account why I cannot agree with you in the Buſineſs of Subſcriptions and Declarations of Faith, where the Scripture it ſelf is not thought a ſufficient Teſt and Standard of Truth in Matters neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, without the farther Explications and Limitations of fallible uninſpired Men: And from hence, perhaps, it may appear, that the Non-ſubſcribers might have ſufficient Reaſons for not complying with your Demands, tho' they had been all of your Mind, with reſpect to any particular Doctrine, or even all the Doctrines, of Chriſtianity. I ſhall not enter into the Conſideration of any particular Reaſons they might have for not Subſcribing at that Time and Place, or in the Manner you would have had them; ſince this may perhaps depend upon

upon Facts, of which I am not ſufficiently apprized. But if I am miſtaken in the general Scheme, I deſire to be ſet right; and I preſume you are too far engaged, to remain indifferent about it.

But I am ſenſible, that all this, or whatever elſe can be ſaid for the Perfection and Sufficiency of Scripture, againſt the impoſed Explications and Opinions of Men, will ſignify nothing with thoſe, who take it for granted, that the Controverſy now on Foot concerns a Fundamental Article of Faith, as deliver'd plainly and clearly in the Holy Scriptures themſelves, and that the Difference betwixt us ſtrikes at the very Being of Chriſtianity. This is what you aſſert in the ſtrongeſt Terms, and with ſuch an Air of Aſſurance and Invincibility of Perſuaſion, as can be juſtify'd only upon ſtrict demonſtrative Evidence. 'Tis openly and ſtrenuouſly declared, that there are ſome among us who would dethrone the Supreme and Great God, and place him in the Condition of a mere Creature; and who, by diveſting the Saviour of the World of thoſe high and glorious Perfections with the Scriptures aſcribe to him, would render him utterly uncapable of executing that Mediatorial Office, which he had undertaken for the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners; and the Wretches who are ſaid to be guilty of this horrible Wickedneſs, are the *Arians* and *Socinians*. I believe you think your ſelf at the fartheſt Remove from *Socinianiſm*; and ſince you have declared the *Socinians* to be the groſſeſt Hereticks, and have excluded them as ſuch from Chriſtian Covenant, and from all the Benefits and Privileges of the Goſpel, one cannot

not ſuppoſe that you reckon your ſelf in any ſuch Company; and yet, if you are not, I think it will be impoſſible for me, or any Man living, to gueſs where or what you are. Now, ſeeing you have made ſo great an Outcry againſt Hereſy, and imagine your ſelf ſo capable a Judge of it, I ſhall briefly examine your own Scheme, and try how far (even your ſelf being Judge) your verbal Orthodoxy can differ from real Hereſy.

In order to ſhew how far and wherein you can differ from a *Socinian*, it will be proper to conſider in what Particulars you muſt neceſſarily be agreed; and when I have ſhewn the Agreement, I muſt leave it to your ſelf, who are doubtleſs moſt capable of it, to expreſs the Difference. You muſt then, I ſuppoſe, agree with the *Socinians* in theſe following Particulars.

1. That there has exiſted from all Eternity, by an abſolute intrinſick Neceſſity of Nature, One only ſupreme independent firſt Cauſe of all Things; One individual intelligent Being, or Agent, of abſolute infinite Perfection; or One God. This is the firſt Principle of Natural Religion, demonſtrable *a priori* from the Nature and Reaſon of Things; and in this, *Chriſtians*, *Jews* and *Mahometans* are all agreed. This, I think, is the only true Notion or Idea that Men have, or can have, of the One Supreme Being. And the Chriſtian Revelation does not ſet up a different Object of Worſhip, from that which was always the True Object of all Religious Worſhip, and Supreme Adoration to Mankind, under the eternal immutable Obligations of the Law of Nature. What the Scripture

ture does in this Caſe, is, Firſt, To reſtore the Knowledge and Worſhip of the One True God, by ſetting his Being and Perfections in a clearer Light, and confirming this Account of him by the Evidence of Miracles; after the true Knowledge of God as revealed in Nature had been in great Meaſure loſt; and Men, thro' the general Corruption of Human Nature, had run themſelves into Idolatry, and the Worſhip of many Gods. Secondly, the Scripture reveals to us the true and acceptable Manner of Worſhipping the One True God, thro' the alone Mediation of his only Begotten Son Chriſt Jeſus; and the Scripture requires us to receive and own Jeſus Chriſt as the Son of God, the Lord Redeemer, and the only Mediator betwixt God and Man; and that we honour, worſhip, and glorify him in this Capacity of Mediator, as the Perſon appointed by God the Father to Govern and Judge the World. But this does not ſuppoſe or imply the leaſt Alteration or Difference in the Nature, Notion or Idea of the One Supreme God, or the Supreme and Ultimate Object of all Honour, Reſpect, Worſhip and Adoration. So that this Principle ſtands now, as it ſtood before, in the preordinate Nature and Reaſon of Things, and is not alter'd; but clear'd, reſtored, and ſet in a ſtronger Light. But ſince it has been pretended, in order to juſtify ſome late Diviſions, that the contending Parties in this Controverſy have a different Object of Worſhip, and therefore cannot with a good Conſcience join together in the ſame Communion; let it be ſhewn that the different Parties have any one different Idea concerning God as the Supreme Object of Wor-

Worſhip, which all *Chriſtians*, *Jews* and *Mahometans*, are not agreed in: I ſay, let this be made out, or for Shame let this Plea be drop'd, as the Scandal of thoſe who make uſe of it without the leaſt Foundation, and when they have nothing elſe to ſay. So that I can't ſee wherein you can differ from the *Socinians*, as to the Object of your Worſhip. The Difference, I think, lies only as to the Manner of it; in the Abſurdity of your pretending to worſhip the One God, thro' the Mediation of himſelf; and ſuppoſing the Perſon, or intelligent Being mediating, to be the ſame with the Perſon offended; or that the Perſon mediating, is not really a Perſon, an intelligent Being or Agent, but a metaphyſical Nature, or abſtract Idea only.

2. You muſt, I ſuppoſe, agree with the *Socinians* in denying, that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, are diſtinct intelligent Beings, Agents, or ſelf-conſcious Minds; which is what they have always declared to be their Meaning, when they deny them to be three diſtinct Perſons. This is the only Trinity which a *Socinian* denies; and herein you are, I ſuppoſe, as much an *Unitarian*, or *Anti-Trinitarian*, as any *Socinian* in the World. And as for any incomprehenſible Differences or Diſtinctions in the One individual ſupreme Being, call them perſonal, or what you pleaſe, the *Socinians* never affirmed or denied any thing about it. 'Tis notorious, that the *Socinians* have always declar'd, that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, are but One God; 'tis true, they have commonly ſuppoſed the Word to be the eſſential Wiſdom, and the Spirit to be the eſſential Power or Energy,

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of God; and hereupon they have deny'd them to be diſtinct Perſons, *i. e.* diſtinct intelligent Beings or Agents. The Notion of the Generation and Proceſſion of the Son and Holy Ghoſt from Eternity, or before all Time, either by a voluntary or neceſſary Act, has been always thought of the laſt Importance to keep up any Idea of diſtinct Perſons; and therefore, this is what the *Socinians* have always ſtrenuouſly deny'd: And ſince you are fallen in with them in their fundamental Principle, and have granted them the Ground of their whole Scheme, perhaps you may like them better for the future, and bring them into Chriſtian Communion again.

3. Since you ſuppoſe that Chriſt's human Soul was not the Word himſelf incarnate, or made Fleſh, but another intelligent Being, diſtinct from the Word; you muſt allow, with the *Socinians*, that the human Perſon, born of the Virgin, the true Body and reaſonable Soul, or the Man Chriſt Jeſus, is a diſtinct intelligent Being from the ſupreme God. Nothing can be more trifling and abſurd, than to ſay here, as perhaps you will, that tho' the Natures are diſtinct, yet the Perſon is the ſame; unleſs you could ſhew, that diſtinct intelligent Natures muſt not be diſtinct intelligent Beings, Agents or Perſons. But I hope we are not talking of mere logical Entities, or of metaphyſical abſtract Natures and Ideas, but of Things really and actually exiſting without us; and yet this empty Sound of Words is the only Difference you can pretend to keep with the *Socinians*.

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To ſay, that a human Soul is the ſame intelligent Being or Agent with the ſupreme God, or that the ſupreme God is the ſame intelligent conſcious perſonal Self with an human Soul, muſt doubtleſs be the higheſt Blaſphemy, as well as the groſſeſt Abſurdity and Contradiction. I would not be thought hereby to ſuggeſt, that this is what you mean by the hypoſtatical Union, as it muſt ſtand in your Scheme; for I have the Charity to think you mean nothing at all by it. But from hence it is viſible, how eaſily learned Men may diſtract and inflame the Minds of very good and well-meaning People, by the mere Magick of Words. And as it is poſſible, by the Mechaniſm of Sounds, to teach dumb Creatures either to fight, or to dance, and to expreſs their good or ill Liking at Pleaſure; ſo I am ſorry I muſt ſpeak out ſo plain a Truth, and tell the World how much they are abuſed; ſince here is a learned Man, and a great Champion for the Orthodoxy of Sounds, who, as I preſume to ſay, is not able, upon his own Principles, to clear himſelf from what he eſteems the worſt of Hereſies.

When you can ſhew, that your verbal Orthodoxy differs in any thing that is intelligible from real *Socinianiſm*, I ſhall allow you to have ſaid ſomething to the Purpoſe. If you cannot do this, I muſt beſeech you, *Sir*, by all the Regards you owe to Chriſtianity and Religion, and by all the Sentiments of Humanity, that you would not go on thus unmercifully to cenſure and condemn other Men, and to beat and abuſe the Servants of another Maſter; ſince it muſt be evident that you are only fighting in

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the dark, and inflaming the Paſſions of People, by the mere Mechaniſm of Sounds; and that you are at the ſame Time, tho', I hope, ignorantly and innocently, pronouncing your own Condemnation.

All that the *Socinians* ſay, is, that the ſupreme God and a human Soul cannot be the ſame intelligent Being, Agent, or Perſon; and therefore, that they cannot, with any Truth or Conſiſtency, be join'd together under one common Name, as if they were the ſame I, the ſame He, or the ſame intelligent Agent or perſonal Self. And really, *Sir*, methinks it is a little hard, that Men ſhould be damn'd, only becauſe they will not talk the groſſeſt Nonſenſe, and renounce the very firſt Principles of Reaſon. 'Tis well if you maintain the Credit of being ſtill in the right with your own Party, after you have ſo plainly yielded the Cauſe to the *Socinians*; for I can hardly think that all your Confidence will be ſufficient to ſkreen you from the Imputation of Hereſy, with thoſe who are of your own Make and Temper, and who think their own Underſtandings and Judgments to be the univerſal Teſt and Standard of Chriſtianity, and the Rule and Meaſure of eternal Life and Death. And when People ſhall come to ſee that you can differ in nothing from a *Socinian* herein, but only in the Abſurdity of calling two intelligent Beings one Agent, or two Perſons one Perſon; I fear they will begin to think, that you have carried your Reſentments a little too far, and that you had much better have been ſilent in this Controverſy.

I ſhall now proceed to take ſome little Notice, as I ſuppoſe you expect I ſhould, of the Strictures you have been pleaſed to make upon ſome Parts of the *Letter of Enthuſiaſm*. And here, as to the Account I had given concerning Certainty and Probability, or Knowledge, as diſtinct from Belief and Perſuaſion, you have ſeveral Faults to reprehend me for; which, becauſe you could not find them in my Diſcourſe, you have thought fit to make.

It ſeems, my Account of Knowledge, or Certainty, as diſtinguiſhed from Belief, or Opinion, has given you very great and grievous Offence; but as I hope to ſhew that you are angry without Cauſe, ſo perhaps you may have ſome Reaſon to repent the Expence you have been at, of a little Learning thrown away upon this Occaſion. I had ſo clearly fixed and defined the Senſe, in which I uſed the Word *Certainty*, that it was hardly poſſible for any one not to ſee how I underſtood it; and you do not pretend to be in any Doubt about my Meaning: But you take the Word in a quite different Senſe from that in which I had profeſſedly uſed it; and then attempt, with wonderful Perſpicuity, to find a Contradiction betwixt Mr. *Chillingworth* and me, in the bare Sound of Words, as abſtracted from their Meaning. 'Tis notorious, that Mr. *Chillingworth*'s whole Book is written againſt the Popiſh Claim of infallible Certainty in Matters of Faith; and it muſt be evident to every Body, that I have deny'd no other Certainty in ſuch Matters, but infallible Certainty; or, if you will, a ſtrict and proper Certainty, or the Perception of intuitive and demonſtrative Evidence. Now, if you

you have no ſuch Certainty in Matters of Faith, you have neither contradicted me, nor ſhewn any Contradiction betwixt me and Mr. *Chillingworth*; but if you think you have any ſuch Certainty, why are you ſo ſhy; and why do you not ſpeak out, and claim it in plain Terms? When I ſay, that they muſt be very weak Proteſtants, if there were any ſuch, who talk of Certainty in Matters of Faith; 'tis evident, that by Certainty here, I muſt underſtand ſtrict and proper Certainty, as diſtinct from all the Degrees of Probability below it, and which, as thus conſider'd, muſt be always infallible Certainty: And to take me in any other Senſe, is ſuppoſing me to ſay, that they muſt be very weak Proteſtants, who talk of Probability in Matters of Probability, or of Faith in Matters of Faith. But, I aſſure you, Sir, that I had no Inclination to trifle at this Rate; and have ſince given the World ſome Account why I think Mr. *Tong*, in his *Introduction*, muſt be underſtood in the Senſe I had fix'd upon, or be ſuppoſed only to trifle and contradict himſelf, in pretending to a ſort of Evidence which he dares not ſtand by. To my ſaying, that they, the *Four Miniſters*, had diſclaimed no Infallibility, but an univerſal unlimited Infallibility in every thing, or an abſolute Freedom from Error, you reply, *p.* 65. "And what o-
"ther Kind of Infallibility would he have
"Men diſclaim? Would he have us renounce
"our Reaſon, and our Senſes? This we muſt
"do, if we tamely grant that we can't be in-
"fallibly certain of any thing. What! will
"not this *Sceptick* yield one Inch of Infallibility
"to intelligent Beings?" I beſeech you not to

tranſport your ſelf beyond Meaſure: You know very well that I allow of infallible Certainty in Matters of Science, or in all Matters capable of intuitive or demonſtrative Evidence: I have deny'd infallible Certainty only in Matters of Faith, or in ſuch Matters as depend wholly upon Teſtimony, and are not founded in the prior Nature and Reaſon of Things, but are convey'd to our Underſtandings only by human, traditional, or hiſtorical Evidence. And here you ought, in all Reaſon and Conſcience, to diſclaim infallible Certainty, or throw off the Proteſtant Diſguiſe. You are now my Witneſs, that the Gentlemen I wrote againſt had diſclaim'd no Infallibility, but an univerſal unlimited Infallibility, or an abſolute Freedom from Error; and this the Pope diſclaims as well as they: And therefore you muſt diſclaim infallible Certainty in Matters of Faith, or elſe I ſhall not yet be able to ſee, that either you or they are inclined to yield one Inch of Ground to his Holineſs, as the ſpiritual Monarch of *Chriſtendom*.

I ſuppoſe you expect that your common Reader ſhould look upon *Scepticiſm* as a very great Hereſy; and yet, as you have managed the Matter, I cannot ſee that you have left any Medium betwixt a *Sceptick* and an *Enthuſiaſt*; and therefore, till you can clear the Account better, I muſt leave you to honour your ſelf with which of the two Characters you like beſt. You go on, *p.* 66. to give the following Account of the Infallibility claimed by the Pope and Church of *Rome*: "What we juſtly con-"demn in the Pope and Church of *Rome*, is, "that they pretend to an abſolute Infallibility "in

" in all Matters of Faith; ſo that whatever
" they decree as a Matter of Faith, and neceſ-
" ſary to Salvation, is ſo by virtue of their
" Sentence; and that all Chriſtians are bound,
" under the Pain of Damnation, (and all the
" temporal Penalties they have Power to in-
" flict,) to ſubmit to their unexamin'd Deci-
" ſions, and to believe them infallible for the
" mere Authority's ſake, tho' they have a De-
" monſtration to the contrary. This Privi-
" lege of Infallibility they appropriate to the
" See of *Rome*, and leave all the reſt of Man-
" kind under the ſame wild Uncertainty this
" Gentleman is bringing them to. And is
" there any Parallel between this impious
" Claim, and aſſerting, that ſuch is the Na-
" ture of the rational Soul, made after the
" Image of God, that we may attain to an
" actual Certainty concerning ſome divine Mat-
" ters, thoſe eſpecially that are moſt plainly
" reveal'd, and of the greateſt Importance to
" be known? All the Infallibility any modeſt
" Man ever pretended to, is, an Aſſurance
" that in ſome Things he is in the right: And
" this cannot be deny'd, without diveſting
" Mankind of their rational Natures."

If by Matters of Faith here, you mean, as you muſt if you contradict me, Matters of pure Revelation, or Truths which depend upon Teſtimony, as diſtinct from Matters of Science; the Pope and Church of *Rome* may, with as much Juſtice, claim Infallibility in all, as in any ſuch Matters. And your pretending to infallible Certainty in ſome ſuch Caſes, but not in all, while you are not able to ſettle the Boundaries, or to tell us in what Points

your Infallibility lies, and in what not; does but render your Scheme the more abſurd and contradictory, and is ſo far from giving you any Advantage of the *Papiſts*, that it expoſes you to their juſt Ridicule. It will be to no Purpoſe to ſay, that you are infallibly in the right in thoſe Matters of Faith which are moſt clearly reveal'd: for ſince you pretend, that ſome Things are clearly and evidently reveal'd to you, which other People cannot find in their Bibles; and ſince the Reflection of Inſincerity, or Dullneſs, is as eaſily retorted as caſt; this muſt ſet you down juſt where you were, and either bring your Infallibility in thoſe Matters to nothing at all, or leave you at as full Liberty as the Pope, to claim it where, and whenſoever you pleaſe. You know, that Matters of Faith, and Points of Belief neceſſary to Salvation, are, in the Popiſh Senſe, equivalent Expreſſions; and that the diſtinguiſhing Matters of Faith into Points fundamental and not fundamental, is what the *Papiſts* do not allow. When the Pope, therefore, claims Infallibility in Matters of Faith, he means, that he is infallibly certain of the Truth of whatever he declares, as neceſſary to the Salvation of all Chriſtians. Now you are either infallibly in the right in every thing neceſſary to the Salvation of all Chriſtians, or you are not; if you are, you are as infallible as the Pope pretends to be, who does not claim any other Infallibility; if you are not, you may, upon your own Principles, periſh everlaſtingly for want of it, by being miſtaken about ſome other Things which are ſuppoſed to be neceſſary to Salvation, and to which your Infallibility does not extend. So that being certainly

certainly and infallibly in the right in ſome Things which are neceſſary to Salvation, unleſs you could be ſo in all ſuch Matters, can do you no good, but muſt leave your Caſe ſtill as miſerable and deſperate as the *Papiſts* would make it. What you ſay next, "That the Pope and Church of "*Rome* demand a Submiſſion to whatever they "declare as neceſſary to Salvation, by *Virtue of* "*their Sentence, and for the mere Authority's ſake,* "even tho' Men have a Demonſtration to the "contrary," is a moſt notorious Falſhood, and a Calumny upon the *Papiſts* themſelves. And indeed, without calumniating the Pope and Church of *Rome*, you could not, upon your own Principles, with any good Grace appear againſt them.

The *Papiſts* were never yet ſo abſurd as to found the Authority of their Declarations and Sentences, upon the Declarations and Sentences themſelves; as if they created their own Faith, and were not Subſtitutes or Delegates in declaring the Mind and Will of God. This would be to place the Pope upon the Throne of Almighty God, and to claim to him divine Homage, Worſhip and Obedience; not barely by Conſequence, but in expreſs Terms. But the Pope has never yet thought fit to declare himſelf to be God, or to make himſelf not the Subſtitute, but the Principal; and I am ſorry you ſhould find your ſelf under any Neceſſity of charging the Pope and Church of *Rome* ſo unjuſtly with this impious Claim. The *Papiſts* make as great a Noiſe about evident Declarations of the Mind and Will of God, and clear and plain Conſequences from Scripture, as you can do. 'Tis true, the Popiſh Advocates have

ſometimes, in their Diſputes with Proteſtants, rejected all Conſequences, and demanded clear and expreſs Proofs from Scripture; as knowing that the Proteſtants, as well as they, hold ſome Things which cannot be proved from Scripture, ſo much as in Appearance, without flying to the Pretence of drawing Conſequences from Principles of pure Revelation; which is the Method by which the *Papiſts* themſelves ſupport the greateſt Abſurdities in their own Religion. The Pope indeed claims an infallible Certainty in Points where he has it not; and takes upon him to declare all Men to be out of the Favour of God, and the Way to Salvation, who will not receive every thing as neceſſary that he defines to be ſuch. And herein, I think, you are even with his Holineſs, and I ſhould be glad to know wherein you come behind him, unleſs it is in your not maintaining, or ſetting up as neceſſary to Salvation, all the Abſurdities and Contradictions that the Pope does. The Cloſe of your Paragraph is as extraordinary as the reſt; for you ſay, "That all the Infallibility "any modeſt Man ever pretended to, is, an "Aſſurance that in ſome Things he is in the "right; and this cannot be deny'd, without "diveſting Mankind of their rational Natures." This, I muſt own, is a modeſt Claim enough; and if this be all the Infallibility any modeſt Man ever pretended to, I preſume that no modeſt Man has ever deny'd it him. I grant you, you may be as infallible as you pleaſe concerning your own Exiſtence, the Being of a God, and the Exiſtence of the Ideas which you are ſelf-conſcious of in your own Mind. This is allowing infallible Certainty in ſome Things;

Things; and if this will content you, the Controverſy with all modeſt Men muſt be at an End. But notwithſtanding this ſeeming Modeſty, I dare ſay, if I ſhould grant you an infallible Certainty concerning all the ſcientifick Principles in the World, whether natural or moral, this would not ſatisfy ſo modeſt a Man; unleſs I ſhould grant you alſo the ſame Certainty in ſome other Matters of mere Revelation, and of a very abſtruſe, doubtful and diſputable Nature.

Having quoted *p.* 67. the Account I had given of infallible Certainty, as founded in the Perception of intuitive or demonſtrative Evidence, you have thought fit to charge it with ſeveral Faults: But perhaps it may appear, upon a very little Conſideration, that theſe Faults are not in my Account of the Matter, but in your Imagination only. The firſt Blunder you think I have made is, in confounding neceſſary with contingent Exiſtence. "I know not, ſay "you, whether this Sceptick be certain of his "own Exiſtence; but I can tell him, it is no "Contradiction to ſuppoſe he had never been "born." You ſeem to be moſt confident and ſecure in your own Sufficiency where you have leaſt Reaſon; you might have obſerved, if you had thought fit, that I was not ſpeaking of the neceſſary Exiſtence of Things; but of the neceſſary Truth of Propoſitions, or the neceſſary Reaſon and Relation of Things. The Idea of Self-conſciouſneſs in my own Mind, has a neceſſary ſelf-evident Connexion with the Idea of Exiſtence; and therefore it is a neceſſary Truth, and the contrary impoſſible, that a ſelf-conſcious Being muſt actually exiſt: tho', as you

learnedly obſerve, it is poſſible that I might not have exiſted. That every reaſonable Creature muſt be obliged to yield the higheſt Honour, Worſhip and Obedience to the Supreme Being, is a neceſſary Truth, and the contrary impoſſible in the Nature and Reaſon of Things; becauſe no reaſonable Creature can exiſt without ſuch a Relation to the Supreme Being; and yet no reaſonable Creature can exiſt by an abſolute intrinſick Neceſſity of Nature.

That a Cone is a third Part of a Cylinder of the ſame Baſe and Altitude, and that a Sphere contains two Thirds of its Circumſcribing Cylinder, are neceſſary Truths, and their Contraries neceſſarily falſe and impoſſible in the Nature of Things, whether there are any Bodies actually exiſting exactly and geometrically Conical, Spherical, and Cylindrical, or not. If this will not help you to diſtinguiſh the neceſſary Truth of Propoſitions, and the Impoſſibility of their Contraries, from the neceſſary Exiſtence of Things; I doubt you will hardly be thought fit to trouble the Publick any farther with your Speculations concerning Certainty and Uncertainty, Neceſſity and Contingency.

Another Fault, it ſeems, is, that I have made a total and abſolute Diſtinction between Matters of Science and Matters of Faith: Whereas theſe Things are to be diſtinguiſhed but in Part. You ſay, they are to be diſtinguiſhed in Part; but, 'tis plain, you endeavour to confound them totally and abſolutely, and would not have them diſtinguiſhed at all. For, if what you have ſaid be to the Purpoſe, there can be no ſuch Diſtinction in Nature; but Matters of Science and

Matters

Matters of Faith muſt with you be the very ſame Matters.

'Tis true, that taking Faith or Belief, in the largeſt Senſe, for the general Aſſent of the Mind to the Truth of a Propoſition, every Matter of Science will be a Matter of Faith too; becauſe it is impoſſible for a Man to know a Thing, without believing or aſſenting to the Truth of it. But then, tho' the lower Degrees of Evidence are included in the higher, yet the higher are not at all included in the lower; and therefore, where we depend wholly upon Teſtimony for the Truth of a Propoſition, which has no prior Foundation in the Nature and Reaſon of Things, this will be purely and merely a Matter of Faith, and will be totally and abſolutely diſtinct from Matters of Science. This, as every one muſt ſee, was the Diſtinction which I had made; but, inſtead of keeping to it and arguing fairly upon it, you thought it more convenient to endeavour to ſhuffle it off, and to looſe the the Reader in a Miſt of Words which have no manner of Relation to the preſent Controverſy.

But I am not like to eſcape ſo; for you will have me miſtaken again, in not allowing what you call *Moral Certainty*, or *Traditional Evidence*, to be of equal Force and Invincibility, in determining the Judgment, with Demonſtration it ſelf; which you affirm all Philoſophers and Divines to be agreed in. This I muſt confeſs is what I did not know, and have now nothing to depend on for it but your Authority. However, if all Philoſophers and Divines are agreed in what you here ſay they are, that Traditional Evidence may be equal to Demonſtration; I

will

will venture to ſay that they are all miſtaken, and I challenge any one Divine or Philoſopher among them to make it good.

I wonder you ſhould think to bear me down with the mere Authority of Philoſophers and Divines; ſince were they all agreed with you herein, as I believe they are not, yet I ſhould not place their Authority in the Room of Evidence: But as it happens, I have not ſaid one Word againſt your moral Certainty in Matters of Faith; and therefore am at Liberty to be as morally certain as your ſelf, where I cannot arrive at a ſtrict Demonſtration of Things; only I muſt put you in Mind, that as a moral Impoſſibility is a poſſible Impoſſibility, or impoſſible Poſſibility, ſo your moral Certainty will always be, in ſome Degree or other, more or leſs an uncertain Certainty; for where the Evidence falls ſhort of Demonſtration, it muſt ſtill ſuppoſe the Poſſibility of the contrary, and then you cannot be ſtrictly *i. e.* infallibly certain that the contrary is not true, or you may poſſibly be miſtaken and actually in the wrong; in which Caſe, the Hazard of being miſtaken will be more or leſs, according as the Evidence on both Sides comes nearer to, or recedes farther from, an Equality. I ſuppoſe you muſt allow that a reaſonable Creature ought to be determined in his Judgment and Practice by nothing but Evidence, or the Reaſon and Fitneſs of Things, as it ſhall appear to him upon a fair Enquiry; and conſequently, that the Degree of Aſſent, or the Strength of Perſuaſion, ought always to be proportional to the Evidence; for what goes beyond it, muſt be an irrational Perſuaſion, or an Aſſent without Evidence.

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Where the Evidence appears equal on both Sides, the Mind cannot rationally determine it ſelf at all concerning the Truth, Reaſonableneſs, or Fitneſs of Things; but muſt ſuſpend its Judgment, and act upon a Principle of mere Indifferency. Where the Evidence on one ſide appears to prevail and outweigh that on the other, the Judgment and Practice ought always to be determined to that ſide on which the ſuperior Evidence lies: And here there will be infinite Degrees of Probability on the one Side, and Improbability on the other, 'till we come at length to demonſtrative or intuitive Evidence on one Side; which muſt abſolutely decide the Caſe, and render the Determination at once Invincible and Infallible, and take off all Poſſibility of Doubt or Suſpence. And from hence it appears, that every reaſonable Creature ought in all Caſes to be determined by the beſt Evidence he can get; or to regulate his Judgment and Practice by what ſhall appear to him to be true, reaſonable, and fit to be done, after a fair Enquiry or impartial Examination. This is the very Point in which all Virtue, Religion and moral Goodneſs conſiſt; and he who regulates his Judgment and Practice upon what appears to his Underſtanding to be true and reaſonable, after a due Enquiry or an impartial Examination, muſt be equally a virtuous Man, and equally juſtifiable and rewardable, whether he be actually in the Right or in the Wrong; and to ſay otherwiſe is to affirm, that Men may be juſtly puniſhed for not being abſolutely and univerſally infallible, or for not being what they could not poſſibly be. This is the Rule which all Mankind proceed upon in the grand Affairs of Life and Death, and in all Mat-

Matters of Equity and Juſtice between Man and Man, in which they are not ſo liable to be impoſed on, or to be bubbled out of their Rights and Senſes by any learned Scholaſtick Jargon. The Judges in *Weſtminſter-Hall* are ſuppoſed to be Men of Uprightneſs and Integrity, and maintain the Character of Righteous Judges, as long as they proceed upon the beſt Evidence they can procure in a Caſe before them; tho' they may be, and often are, miſtaken in the Evidence, and go contrary to the Reality and Truth of Things in Fact.

You may call this, when apply'd to religious Matters, *Scepticiſm*, *Hereſy*, *Infidelity*, or what you pleaſe. I have learned by Experience not much to regard ſuch perſonal Reproaches, and opprobrious Names; eſpecially from thoſe who are ſo free with them upon all Occaſions, while they are ſo ſparing of their Proofs. I hope to maintain the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, and upon that Foot to make light of the Condemnation of Man. I write for no Party, nor with any Expectation of a Reward from Men; but for what I take to be the Common Intereſt of the Goſpel, the Cauſe of Chriſtian Liberty, and the Religious Rights of Mankind; and theſe I am reſolved, by God's Aſſiſtance, to defend in the beſt Manner I can, againſt the Spiritual Tyranny, Bigotry and Enthuſiaſm of all Parties, or any Party whatever.

I have one Account more to adjuſt with you before I conclude; and that is, concerning what you have ſaid in your Marginal Notes, *p.* 77. about the Belief of Myſterious Propoſitions; in which, with a Dexterity common to Learned Men, who have a bad Cauſe to manage, you affirm and deny the ſame Thing. You own,

that

that what is Myſterious and Incomprenheſible, cannot be the Object of Faith; That we can neither believe or disbelieve it, or employ one Thought about it. That the Thing it ſelf may be clear and intelligible enough, where the Manner of the Thing is Myſterious and wholly Incomprehenſible, is very certain; but then, the Thing it ſelf and the Manner of the Thing, are really too different Things; and the Propoſitions and Truths concerning them, as different as any Propoſitions and Truths in the World: Which is evident from hence, that the One may be clearly known and reveal'd, where the Other is abſolutely unknown and unreveal'd. And therefore it is very ſtrange what you add hereupon, "that in this Senſe we can juſtify our be-"lieving Myſterious Propoſitions, againſt all "the Cavils of profane Infidels, who ſport "themſelves with their own Deceptions, when "they compare believing of Myſteries, or Things "above Reaſon to comprehend, with ſeeing "Things which are out of Sight".

If the Belief of what is reveal'd, may be called the Belief of a Myſtery, or of what is not reveal'd; by the ſame way of Talking, the Knowledge of what is known, may be called the Knowledge of what is not or cannot be known: And therefore, in this Senſe we can juſtify the Knowledge of what is unintelligible, and the underſtanding of what cannot be underſtood; in this Senſe we can deſtroy all Diſtinction between what is known or unknown, reveal'd or unreveal'd; and in this Senſe we can juſtify any Abſurdity or Contradiction in the World, againſt the Cavils of all ſuch profane Infidels, as will not renounce at once both their Reaſon and Senſes, to be determined by down-

right

right magiſterial Nonſenſe. However you may endeavour to impoſe upon and abuſe weak People; the Queſtion is not, as you pretend, Whether we may not both underſtand and believe a Thing as very clear and intelligible, where the Manner of the Thing (which in this Caſe is indeed a quite different Thing) is wholly incomprehenſible? But the Queſtion is this, Whether the Thing it ſelf, which you ſay is reveal'd, be ſo or not? And I think enough has been ſaid, till ſome clear Anſwer be given to it, to ſhew, that the Thing it ſelf, which you contend for, is as incomprehenſible as the Manner of the Thing; that you make uſe of Words in Propoſitions, ſuppoſed to be reveal'd, without Ideas; and that as you *know not what Spirit you are of*, ſo you know not what you ſay, nor can by any Means tell what 'tis that you would have other People believe. If you can tell me clearly and intelligibly what your Opinion is, and what you think mine ought to be, concerning the *Trinity*; I had almoſt ſaid, that I will engage to become your Diſciple: And till you can do this, I hope you will give me leave to underſtand the Scriptures the beſt I can for my ſelf, and to confeſs my Ignorance where I cannot underſtand them, without excluding me from the Communion of Chriſtians, and the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant. I have given you ſome Reaſons why I cannot be exactly of your Mind in ſeveral Matters, and why I think you ought to explain your ſelf a little farther: And I muſt now ſubmit the Whole to your Conſideration.

I am, SIR,

Your Humble Servant,

T. M.

Marlbrough, May 18. 1720.

A

LETTER

TO

Sir *Richard Blackmore.*

Occasioned by his Book, intitled,

Modern Arians *Unmask'd.*

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SIR,

I Cannot expreſs to you the different Paſſions with which I was affected, upon reading your Book, intitled, *Modern* Arians *Unmask'd*, &c. With great Reſolution, and ſome Pains, I have diſpoſſeſs'd my ſelf of all thoſe Sentiments which may not be ſo proper to be mixed with a Controverſy; eſpecially while I am concern'd with a Gentleman, who muſt in Juſtice be conſidered as a Perſon of Learning, Probity and Honour. But ſtill I cannot ceaſe to wonder, when I compare the Book with the Character of the Author; for 'tis really in it ſelf ſurprizing, that a learned and good Man ſhould think to ſerve the Cauſe of true Religion, by ſubſtituting only *warm Dehortations*, *wrong Impeachments* and *inde-*

liberate Charges, in the Place and Room of rational *objective Evidence*. I ſhall here therefore take the Liberty to lay before you the Reaſons I have to conclude, that amidſt all this paſſionate Harangue, and poetick Fury, you have offered no good Argument or Reaſon at all; but on the contrary, have, in all reſpects, imitated the Popiſh Advocates in their Method of making *Proſelites*, and eſtabliſhing People in the *Faith*; excepting only the *ſpecial Favour* of not giving up your Adverſaries to the Civil *Coercive Power*: for which Piece of *natural Juſtice*, in the Name of all thoſe who are ſo unhappy as to be reputed unorthodox, I heartily thank you.

You begin, by declaring the vaſt Importance of the preſent Caſe, as it ſtands in your Apprehenſion; and endeavour to ſhew, that it muſt be utterly unjuſtifiable, on the Principles of either Side, for the contending Parties in this Controverſy to maintain Chriſtian Communion with each other, *p.* 3, 4, 5.

" A great Number of Men among us, which " is very ſurprizing, ſpeak of the Controverſy " between the Believers of Chriſt's Deity and " their Adverſaries, as a Matter of no great " Concernment. It is only, ſay they, a Dif- " ference of Opinion about a Subject that is " difficult to be underſtood; that there are " Men of Learning and Probity on either Side " of the Queſtion; and therefore they conclude, " that ſuch Men ſhould live peaceably together, " and maintain Charity and Friendſhip with " one another. Hence they are not afraid to cen- " ſure thoſe that engage in this Diſpute, and " ſtrenuouſly contend for the Chriſtian Faith, " as turbulent and injudicious Perſons, who

" lay

" lay too great a Streſs upon Matters of infe-
" rior Moment. Now to diſabuſe theſe Gentle-
" men, I will ſet before them the Weight and
" Importance of this Controverſy. It is a
" Controverſy that nearly affects Salvation, and
" concerns the very Being of Chriſtianity, ſince
" the Objects which the Orthodox and their
" Adverſaries worſhip are eſſentially different.
" The Object which the Orthodox worſhip, is
" One who never had Beginning; That which
" Disbelievers of Chriſt's Deity worſhip, had
" a Beginning: The One exiſts neceſſarily,
" the Other does not exiſt neceſſarily: One,
" in the Opinion of the Worſhipper, is e-
" qual with the Father, *God moſt High*, in
" Knowledge, Power, and Glory; the Other,
" in the Worſhipper's Judgment, is not equal
" with God moſt High, in Knowledge, Pow-
" er and Glory. Now the plain Conſequence
" of this Difference about the very Object of
" Worſhip is, that the Believers of Chriſt's
" Divinity muſt be condemned by their Ad-
" verſaries, if they are true to their Principles,
" as guilty of Idolatry, for paying divine Wor-
" ſhip to One, who, in their Opinion, is not
" God *moſt High*, Infinite, Eternal, and *of him-
" ſelf Omniſcient*; which I have ſhewn in a former
" Writing on this Subject, and ſhall more evi-
" dently evince in the Sequel of this Diſcourſe.
" It will then follow, that the Disbelievers of
" Chriſt's Deity muſt be Idolaters likewiſe, by
" continuing in conſtant Communion with our
" Churches, which, in their Judgment, if they
" follow their own Doctrine, are guilty of that
" Impiety: And on the other hand, the Or-
" thodox or Catholicks, muſt look upon them

" as Idolaters, for paying divine Honours to
" One who is not *God moſt High*. Since there-
" fore Controverſies become, and are denomi-
" nated, great and important, from the Great-
" neſs and Importance of their Subject; and ſince
" here the Object of Divine Worſhip is the
" Point in Debate; this Diſpute muſt be of the
" higheſt Nature, and next to that about the
" Foundation of all Religion, the Exiſtence of
" God; and muſt be allow'd to be the moſt
" material that can ariſe about the Chriſtian
" Scheme.".

I have choſen to quote you out upon this Argument, that the Reader might have the whole Strength of your Cauſe in one View; for as to any other Appearance of Evidence in this Caſe, which is here promiſed in the Sequel of this Diſcourſe, I have not been able to diſcover it. Now to diſſipate this Miſt of *Words*, and diſſolve the Charm, I ſhall beg leave to make the following Remarks.

1. Then, it is a little ſurprizing, that you here attribute to *Chriſt* the moſt peculiar and perſonal Characters of *God the Father*; ſuch as *God moſt High*, God in *and of himſelf Infinite, Eternal, Omnipotent*, and *Omniſcient*; that is, if you mean any Thing, *God abſolutely Supreme, Unoriginate*, and *Self-exiſtent*; for this you muſt ſay, to eſtabliſh that abſolute, ſtrict and proper Equality and Co-ordination, which you here declare for in the ſtrongeſt Terms, and in Words that are moſt expreſſive of ſuch an Equality. Now upon this foot you muſt either ſay, that *Chriſt*, as to his *Deity*, is the *ſelf-ſame Perſon* with God the *Father*; or elſe, that he is another Perſon diſtinct from the *Father*, but abſolutely

ſolutely co-ordinate with him, and in all reſpects equally high and glorious. If you ſhould ſay, that *Chriſt*, as to his *Deity*, is the *ſame Perſon* with God the *Father*, you know the Conſequences of this *Sabellian Scheme*; that it muſt from hence follow, that God the *Father* was incarnate, ſuffered, and died, as much as the *Son*, and this, to make an Atonement and Satisfaction to *himſelf*; that when Chriſt ſays, *My Father is greater than I*, he means only that the Divine Nature is greater than the Human, or that himſelf, as God, was greater than himſelf, as Man; that as often as our Saviour pray'd to and worſhipped the *Father*, he pray'd to and worſhipped *himſelf*; and that when, in his laſt Agonies, he cry'd out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me*, he muſt be underſtood of crying out to *himſelf*, as having forſaken *himſelf*. Theſe, and ſuch like Conſequences, I preſume you cannot bear, and the Current of Orthodoxy ſeems now to be turned another Way; and therefore, perhaps, you will ſay, that *Chriſt* is not the *ſame*, but another and diſtinct *Perſon* from God the *Father*, in all reſpects equally high and glorious. Now, though this might be demonſtrated, upon many Accounts, to be abſolutely impoſſible and contradictory; yet I ſhall here only inſiſt upon that which muſt be obvious to every Man's Apprehenſion. 'Tis plain then, that where there is ſuppoſed to be a ſtrict and proper Equality or Co-ordination between Two or more Perſons, the Title and Character of *moſt High* cannot, with any Truth or Juſtice, be aſſumed by any *One* of them; becauſe ſuch an Aſſumption muſt derogate from the equal Honour and Glory of the Other's. When, therefore, you ſtile *Chriſt*

God *moſt High*, you muſt either ſuppoſe him *higher* than God the *Father*, or elſe you evidently derogate from, and deny the *at leaſt* equal Honour and Glory of the Father; ſince no *one* can be God *moſt High*, while there is *another*, who is at leaſt *as high* and glorious as the former. If you ſhould ſay, that you do not entitle Chriſt *God moſt High*, with reſpect to the *Father*, but only with reſpect to ſubordinate created Beings; this would be too trifling to deſerve a ſerious Anſwer: Since in this Senſe *you* might as well be ſtiled the higheſt, the moſt learned and honourable Philoſopher or Divine; that is, the moſt high, learned and honourable in reference to all thoſe who are lower or leſs learned and honourable than your ſelf. But,

2. I muſt obſerve farther, that you have here, by overdoing, ruin'd all, and unhappily involved your orthodox Friends, together with their Adverſaries, in the Guilt of Idolatry. Inſtead of proving that the Orthodox and their Adverſaries muſt, in Conſequence of their different and reſpective Principles, conſider each other as Idolaters, you have proved that both Sides muſt be Idolaters upon your *own Principles*. Idolatry, in your Account, conſiſts in paying any Religious or Divine Worſhip to any *One* who is not *God moſt high*, God *of himſelf*, infinite, eternal, omniſcient, *&c. i. e. ſelf-exiſtent*. Now it is notorious, that all the learned orthodox Writers, who have hitherto undertaken to give us the Senſe of the Catholick Church in this Point, have ever declared it as the peculiar and perſonal Character of the *Father only*, to be God moſt high, or the moſt high God, God in and of himſelf, God unoriginate, or ſelf-exiſtent,

tent, or *God emphatically*; and they have ſtill maintain'd, that *Chriſt* is God of God, or God originate and begotten, who has ſome Way or other derived his whole Exiſtence, Being, and Deity, from the *Father*: Yet all thoſe Gentlemen profeſſedly pay a properly religious and divine Worſhip to *Chriſt*, as God of God, or God begotten. Dr. *Waterland*, whoſe Authority you will not, I hope, ſlight in this Caſe, declares, that the Father only is *God emphatically*, *i. e.* God under a certain peculiar Senſe, in which there is no other God beſides him, and in which Chriſt himſelf is not God; and therefore, whenever he talks of an Equality, he takes Care to except the Caſe of *Unorigination* or *Self-exiſtence*; by which he evidently deſtroys a real Equality, and eſtabliſhes a *real Subordination*; and I know of no conſiderable orthodox Writer who has ever contradicted him in this Point, or carry'd the Matter in any other Way: And yet the Doctor, and thoſe of his Way, worſhip the *Son*, not as God *moſt High*, God *of himſelf*, or God abſolutely ſupreme, unoriginate and unbegotten, but as God of God, or God begotten. Nothing can be more evident therefore than this, that the Doctor, and, according to him, the whole Catholick Church, muſt, upon your Principles, be Idolaters; and conſequently, you ought, upon your *Hypotheſis*, to ſeparate from them, and renounce their Communion, as worſhipping *One*, who, by their own Acknowledgment, is not *God moſt high*, God in and of himſelf, or God abſolutely ſupreme. If therefore, Sir, you expect your Adverſaries ſhould take your Advice, by ſeparating Communion from you, I hope you will

give them a good Example, by acting up to the Scheme you have advanced, and reſolving into a Church of your own, conſiſting only of your ſelf and a few private Friends.

3. Another Remark that I cannot but make upon this Reaſoning of yours, and which I take to be well worth your ſerious Conſideration, is, that you here apply the Name *Chriſt* to Two eſſentially diſtinct and infinitely different *Perſons*, *intelligent Beings*, or *Agents*; and you all along perplex and darken your Diſcourſe and Argument, by confounding thoſe *Two Perſons* under one and the ſame *Name*, as if they were *one* and the *ſame Perſon*. *Chriſt* with you is ſometimes *God moſt high*, or the ſupreme God, and ſometimes he is the *Man Chriſt* Jeſus of *Nazareth*, or the *human Perſon* born of the Virgin. But is it poſſible, I beſeech you, that the *moſt high God* ſhould be the *Man Chriſt himſelf*, or that the Man Chriſt ſhould be the ſupreme God *himſelf*? Can theſe two infinitely different and eſſentially diſtinct Perſons be one and the ſame Self, or the ſame Perſon? or, can you poſſibly form any Notion or Idea of *human Nature* as abſtracted from *human Perſonality*? If you ſhould pretend any Thing like this, I hope you will think your ſelf concerned to make it good; and not expect that People ſhould ſubmit to bare Dictates, or be determined only by pathetick Declamations, without the leaſt Appearance of Truth, or the leaſt Spark of Light or Evidence. This is that grand Pillar which muſt now be thought to ſupport the whole Fabrick of Chriſtianity, and upon which all who will not reſt for eternal Salvation muſt be ſhut out of the Kingdom of Heaven; and

yet

yet in this whole Debate, there has not been one orthodox Writer who has dar'd to meddle with it.

4. But that which is moſt material of all, as to the preſent Argument, is, that you here talk ſo much of *religious Worſhip* and *Idolatry*, without once ſettling or aſcertaining the determinate Senſe of the Words; and indeed you apply them in ſo general and confuſed a Manner, that it does not yet appear to me whether you mean any Thing by the Words or not. You charge your Adverſaries with Idolatry, for worſhipping *One*, who in their Opinion is not the *moſt high* or *ſupreme God*; and I have ſhewn that your orthodox Friends do the ſame, by their own Acknowledgment. It will be to no Purpoſe here to ſay, that the Orthodox, however, ſuppoſe Chriſt to be much higher and greater than their Adverſaries make him; for ſtill while they ſuppoſe him to be any Thing leſs than the moſt high or ſupreme God, they muſt be Idolaters in your Account.

But becauſe I would not leave the Matter ſo much in the dark, I ſhall here lay down my own Principles; and leave it to your Choice, whether you will fall in with me, or advance ſomething farther of your own that may be more conſiſtent and intelligible. By *religious Worſhip*, then, I mean all that Obedience, of what Nature or Kind ſoever, which is conſidered as an Obligation upon Conſcience, and reſolved abſolutely into the governing Will or Law of the moſt *high God*; and in Conſequence of this, any ſuch Act of Obedience, which is not reſolved abſolutely into the ſupreme Authority of the moſt high God, is in my Account

count Idolatry, or an Act of falſe and miſplaced Worſhip.

I ſuppoſe it muſt be paſt diſpute, that this ſupreme abſolute Authority, or Right of Legiſlation, muſt be founded in an abſolute Supremacy of Nature, Being, and Perfection, and can no more be communicated to any ſubordinate or inferior Being, than unoriginate Self-exiſtence. There cannot be imagined any higher or more peculiar Act of religious or divine Worſhip, than an abſolute Submiſſion of the Heart and Conſcience to the legiſlative Authority, or governing Will of any Being, as ſuch; for where there is no farther Appeal, no ſuperior Power or Authority acknowledged, there cannot be any higher or more abſolute Obedience. As this ſupreme Authority, with reſpect to the inward free Obedience of the Heart and Conſcience, is abſolute; ſo it is likewiſe evidently univerſal or unlimited, extending to all poſſible Caſes whatever; or, which is the ſame Thing, the conſtituting any Law which ſhall bind the Conſcience under the Sanctions of Eternal Life and Death, is the incommunicable and ſole Prerogative of the *ſupreme* or moſt high God; and therefore, where any ſubordinate Being ſets up his *own Will* as the ſupreme Law, and claims an abſolute Submiſſion and Obedience of Conſcience to this his Will, *as ſuch*, he ſo far places himſelf in Room of the moſt High, challenges a properly religious and divine Worſhip, and aſſumes that peculiar Glory, which God will not, and cannot give to another. In Conſequence of this, it muſt follow, that no ſubordinate Will whatever can have any binding Force or Obligation upon Con-

Conſcience: For either it will be agreeable to the Will and Law of God, or not; if not, the Caſe is plain, that it cannot bind the Conſcience; but if it be agreeable to the Will of God, as requiring the ſame Thing that God has likewiſe commanded, the Obligation, or binding Force upon Conſcience, ariſes not from any ſuch ſubordinate Will or Law, *as ſuch*, or in it ſelf conſidered, but from the prior and ſuperior Will of God, which is ſtrictly and properly the Law, into which all Obedience of Conſcience muſt be abſolutely and rightfully reſolved. It has, I know, been pretended, that ſubordinate Rulers, whether Civil or Eccleſiaſtical, have ſtrictly and properly a legiſlative Authority veſted in themſelves, eſpecially in Things merely indifferent, and where God has not interpoſed by any prior Determination or Law of his own. But with Submiſſion, this is aſcribing to them a ſtrictly divine Authority, and paying them a properly religious Worſhip and Obedience, and that in the higheſt and moſt unexceptionable Inſtance of it. The neceſſary Rectitude and Perfection of the divine Nature, is commonly the Rule and Meaſure upon which God himſelf conſtitutes his Laws, and determines his Will; and he very rarely exerciſes that moſt peculiar Prerogative of all, in commanding Things purely indifferent, merely for the Tryal of the moſt abſolute Reſignation and Obedience. There cannot therefore be a more abſurd or extravagant Pretence than this, that any ſubordinate Rulers have an Authority of making Laws about Things *purely indifferent*; for where the Matter and all the Circumſtances of the Law are ſuppoſed

poſed to be indifferent, the Law is confeſſedly founded upon no Reaſon or Neceſſity at all, and ſerves only to exerciſe an abſolute uncontroulable Power, and that in the moſt extraordinary Inſtance of it that can be imagined as peculiar to God himſelf. But tho' God has reſerved to himſelf the Right and Prerogative of trying the Obedience of his Creatures in this Way, yet he cannot poſſibly give his *Glory* in this Caſe to another, without diveſting himſelf of his Deity or ſupreme Dominion. It will be here ask'd, perhaps, If this be ſo, that all proper legiſlative Authority is peculiar to God *moſt high*, what Authority has ſubordinate Rulers; and wherein does their Power conſiſt? I anſwer, in Promulgation and Juriſdiction, or in the Right of declaring, divulging, and executing the Laws of God, by applying them to particular Perſons and Circumſtances: For tho' all proper legiſlative Authority be peculiar to God only, yet it does not appear that he ever declared or executed his own Will by himſelf immediately, in his own Perſon, and without any ſubordinate Agency; this therefore is a Truſt which he commits to ſubordinate Agents in different Degrees and Meaſures, according to their different *Natures*, *Situations* and *Capacities*.

The Limits to which I have confin'd my ſelf, will not permit me here to apply this to all the particular Caſes in which it might ſerve to give Light; but I muſt not omit that famous Diſtinction between ſupreme and mediatorial or ſubordinate *Worſhip*, which has lately occaſioned ſome Debate betwixt the Reverend Mr. *Pyke*, and the learned Author of *The Unity*, &c. I take

take Leave here, Sir, to mention Mr. *Pyke's* Name, becauſe I preſume he is an Author highly in your Favour, and one who has been thought to have advanced ſomething of Conſequence in this Matter: However, I doubt not but it muſt appear to Mr. *Pyke*, and to the whole World, upon a little Conſideration, that *his ſupreme Worſhip*, when rightly underſtood, will be the very ſame Thing with his Adverſary's *mediatorial* or ſubordinate *Worſhip*; and that he has contradicted him for no other Reaſon in the World, but only becauſe he did not, or would not underſtand him. I think it muſt be evident, beyond all Contradiction, that the inward ſincere Obedience and Conformity of our Hearts and Wills to the ſupreme Authority and Law of God, is that which conſtitutes the Religion of any Action; and therefore every Act which is equally founded upon, and reſolved into, the ſame ſupreme Authority, will be equally a religious Act, and a Part of divine Worſhip, be its direct and immediate Object what it will. The Diſtinction between ſupreme and mediatorial or ſubordinate Worſhip, is not grounded upon the different Authority into which it is ultimately and abſolutely reſolved; but upon the different Object on which it is conſidered as terminated, and which may be either ſupreme or ſubordinate, while the *Conſtitutive Authority*, and conſequently the *Religion* of the Act, is ſtill the ſame. He who honours and obeys *Parents*, *Magiſtrates*, and all other Superiors in the Lord, or as God has appointed and commanded, does at the ſame Time, and in the ſame Act, pay the higheſt Honour to God, by reſolving all ſuch ſubordi-

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nate Honour and Obedience abſolutely into the ſupreme Authority and Will of God; which is doubtleſs the higheſt Inſtance of Honour, Veneration and Reſpect, that can poſſibly be paid to any Being. Will any Man of common Senſe ſay, that his honouring and obeying Parents, Magiſtrates, *&c.* is no Part of his Religion? or that God himſelf is not ſtrictly and properly honoured, worſhipped and obey'd in our ſo doing, while all ſuch ſubordinate Honour is regulated by, and abſolutely reſolved into, the Will of God? Now if Mr. *Pyke* cannot ſay, either that he does not honour Chriſt *as Mediator* at all, or that his thus honouring him is no Part of his Religion, or that he honours him *as Mediator*, under the Notion of the *ſupreme God*; if he cannot, I ſay, ſtand to either of theſe, as I preſume he will not, I muſt leave him and others to conſider what real Oppoſition he has made to the Author of *The Unity*, *&c.* in all that he would be thought to have ſaid againſt him on the Point of ſupreme and mediatorial Worſhip. If by *ſupreme Worſhip*, he means all that Obedience, of what Nature ſoever, or upon what Object ſoever terminated, which is ultimately and abſolutely reſolved into the ſupreme Authority and Will of God; it is granted him, that in this Senſe there is no ſuch thing as ſubordinate Worſhip, nor did ever any Body in this Senſe contend for it: But if he means, that all the Honour due to ſubordinate Beings, by the Will and Appointment of God, is no Part of his *Religion*, or that God is not hereby worſhipped and ſerved, he may take the Honour to himſelf of having ſet up a new Religion, or Method of worſhipping God,

that

that was never known or heard of in the World before. In the firſt Caſe, he will contradict no Body; in the ſecond, he will contradict every Body. And therefore, he may take his Choice here, whether he will have no Adverſary, or no Friend; none to oppoſe, or none to defend him.

I hope, *Sir*, you will pardon me this Digreſſion, which however I thought not wholly beſide the Purpoſe; and I ſhall now proceed more directly to your Argument, by which you endeavour to prove, that your orthodox Friends, and their Adverſaries, ought, upon their different and reſpective Principles, to conſider and treat each other as Idolaters. But, in the firſt Place, I muſt ſeriouſly profeſs to you, *Sir*, that I am heartily ſorry to ſee the Temper you are in, and to think that I muſt yet contribute ſo much more towards the heightening and inflaming your Paſſions; which I fear the bare Neceſſity of the Argument will force me to, whatever Favour I ſhould allow you upon other Accounts. 'Tis great Pity, methinks, to ſee you thus arming your ſelf with inexorable Revenge, and breathing nothing but Slaughter and Deſtruction, Hell and Damnation, againſt your innocent Brethren, and Fellow Chriſtians, who never did you any Injury, and who would not do it if they had it in their Power; but are willing to live peaceably with you, as good Subjects, and good Chriſtians, in worſhipping the One only *true God*, through the alone Mediation of his only *begotten Son*, by the joint Aid and Aſſiſtance of the ſame *bleſſed Spirit*, and in hope of the ſame immortal Crown and *Kingdom of Glory*. But this it ſeems will not do,

your

your Fury is not to be appeaſed with Friendſhip or Religion; and indeed were your Power equal to your Anger, it muſt be very dangerous at this Juncture to approach you, and it would be high Time for your Adverſaries to betake themſelves, if poſſible, to the Rocks and Mountains for ſhelter, However, as this *Rage* of *Imagination* can hurt no Body but your ſelf, I ſhall venture even your higheſt Diſpleaſure, in laying open what I look upon to be your Miſtakes and Errors. In order to which, I ſhall only beg that you would pardon me the Preſumption, *Sir*, of conſidering you as a mere Man, and a fallible Creature; which is the ſole *Poſtulatum* I require, and all that I need againſt you. You ſtate the Caſe of Idolatry between the Orthodox and the *Arians*, thus: The Orthodox muſt look upon their Adverſaries as Idolaters, becauſe they pay divine Worſhip and Honour to *Chriſt*, while they believe him not to be the *ſupreme* or *moſt high God*, but a ſubordinate Being or Creature only; and theſe again muſt look upon the Orthodox as *Idolaters*, for worſhipping Chriſt as God *moſt High*, who is not ſo upon *Arian* Principles; and farther, while they continue knowingly and willingly to hold Communion with each other, they muſt ſtrengthen and aggravate the ſame Guilt of Idolatry on both Sides, by a mutual Participation with *thoſe*, who upon their different and reſpective Principles muſt be *Idolaters*. This is, I think, in ſhort, the whole Strength and Force of your Argument, tho' you draw it out thorough the whole Book, only for the ſake of mixing it with all the Invective and Aſſurance you are Maſter of; and hereupon you

you conclude, with great Security, *p.* 17. "And now let theſe ſubtle Diſputants call in "Aid all the Forces of Criticiſm and Philoſo-"phy; let them explain, diſtinguiſh, ſhift, "and ſtrive, as long as they pleaſe, to diſen-"tangle themſelves; they are here *ſet faſt*, and "and can *never get off*." If this be ſo, there is no help for it; but if all this ſhould appear, as I imagine it will, to be nothing elſe but *vain Confidence*, and mere empty *inſignificant Boaſting*, perhaps you may repent this dogmatizing, and learn before you ſtep into the Grave, to be more *Catholick*, and leſs *Infallible*.

I muſt own, you have ſet the whole Matter in as clear a Light, as *Words* are capable of without a *Meaning*; but whenever we come to affix any certain determinate Senſe to the Words *God*, *Chriſt*, *Religious Worſhip*, and *Idolatry*, your whole Argument will be loſt; and every one will ſee that under great and ſpecious Appearances, you have been ſaying *juſt nothing*. I have already laid down the general Principles, which, being apply'd to the ſeveral Parts of your Argument, will eaſily diſcover its extream Weakneſs and Inconſequence.

You ground your Charge of Idolatry againſt your Adverſaries, upon this, that they pay religious or divine Honour to *Chriſt*, while they conſider him only as a *ſubordinate Being*. You know very well that theſe Hereticks pretend to honour and obey Chriſt *as Mediator*, according to the Will and Appointment of God *the Father*: And methinks 'tis hard they ſhould be Idolaters for *obeying God*. 'Tis evident that God has directed us to yield different Degrees of Honour, Reſpect, and Submiſſion, to ſubordi-

nate Beings, according to their different Relations to us, and the different Degrees of Authority and Juriſdiction they have over us. Now you muſt either allow, that That very Honour and Obedience which is thus paid to any ſuch ſubordinate Being, by the Will and Appointment of God, is a Part of your religious Worſhip, or elſe you muſt ſay, that 'tis no Part of your Religion to *obey God*. I would here ask you, *Sir*, whether you and your Orthodox Friends do not honour and obey Chriſt *as Mediator*; or whether you do not ſubmit your ſelves to the Authority and Juriſdiction of *that Man whom God has ordained to judge the World*, and whereof he hath given us ſufficient Aſſurance *in raiſing him from the Dead?* If you will ſay, either that you do not honour and obey Chriſt *as Mediator* at all; or that this Honour and Obedience is no Part of your religious or divine Worſhip; or that you honour and obey Chriſt *as Mediator*, under the Notion of the *ſupreme God*; I preſume your Adverſaries will not envy you the Honour of this new Religion: But if you cannot ſtand to any of this, I verily believe you muſt either acquit the *Hereticks*, or condemn the *Orthodox*; which is indeed a very *hard*, but I imagine you will find it your *only Choice*.

Methinks I could give ſomething conſiderable, if I had but your Definitions of *religious Worſhip*, and of *Idolatry*; but ſince I am not ſo happy, I muſt content my ſelf with only gueſſing at your Meaning. I ſhall ſuppoſe therefore, which ſeems moſt likely, that by *religious Worſhip*, you mean that particular Degree and Meaſure of *Honour*, *Veneration*, and *Obedience*, which

which is due only to *God*, conſidered as a Being of *abſolute, infinite Perfection:* which when paid to the true God, is true Religion; but when directed to any other Being, it is Idolatry and falſe Worſhip. If this be not your *Meaning*, I think it will be very difficult, if not impoſſible, to diſcover it by your *Words*; and yet in this Account of the Matter, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that there never has been, nor can be, any ſuch thing as *Idolatry* in the World. 'Tis very evident, that neither Heathens, Papiſts, or any other Idolaters, ever did pay that ſort of *Honour* or *Veneration* to their *Idols* and *falſe Gods*, which is due only to the *true God*, conſidered as a Being of *abſolute infinite Perfection*. The Heathens did not conſider any one properly divine Attribute in any of *their Gods*; but aſcribed to them human Appetites and Paſſions, nay, the worſt of Luſts and Vices; and the Honour they pay'd them was ſuch, as, being paid to the true God, muſt have provoked him more than not worſhipping him at all; and ſuch as could be agreeable only to the Nature and Will of the Devil. And indeed they ſeem'd to conſider no ſort of Perfection in their Idol Gods, but that ſuperior Knowledge and Power with which every one muſt ſuppoſe the Devil himſelf to be endued. Produce one ſingle Inſtance, if you can, in which any of the Pagan Idols were conſidered by their Worſhippers as inveſted with *abſolute infinite Perfection*, or in which any falſe God ever aſſumed the *real Character*, or peculiar Attributes, of the *true God*. This you cannot do; and yet you are ſo very ſecure upon the Point, that, *p.* 16. you claim *the univerſal Con-*

ſent of all Chriſtian Writers. I cannot pretend to be acquainted with *all Chriſtian Writers* upon this Subject; but there is one *Chriſtian Writer*, whoſe Authority, I preſume, muſt have ſome Weight with you; I mean, the Learned Sir *Richard Blackmore*; who, in the Inſtance of Popiſh Idolatry, reſpecting the Adoration of the Hoſt, *p.* 19. has contradicted all that you have ſaid about *religious Worſhip* and *Idolatry*. The Author juſt now quoted, ſuppoſes the Papiſts to be guilty of Idolatry in worſhipping *the Hoſt*. That they are guilty of Idolatry in this Caſe, is agreed indeed by Proteſtant Writers; but how they ſhould be ſo upon your Principles, I cannot ſee. Does a Papiſt ſuppoſe the *Body of Chriſt* to be endued with abſolute Perfection, or that *Chriſt's Body* is the one *ſupreme ſelf-exiſtent Being?* Methinks you ſhould not imagine this of them; at leaſt you can have no Reaſon to imagine it. What if a Papiſt ſhould tell you, as doubtleſs he would, that when he kneels before the Hoſt, it is not properly the *Body*, but the *Perſon* of Chriſt that is the real Object of his *Worſhip*, and whom he thus worſhips upon the Occaſion of his ſuppoſed *bodily Preſence*: Muſt you not allow this, where the Object is right, to be a true Act of Worſhip, whether Chriſt be bodily preſent or not? The worſhipping Chriſt as bodily preſent, when he is not bodily preſent, is indeed a Miſtake; but ſtill you muſt own that, whether he is or is not bodily preſent, he is always equally a proper Object of religious Adoration and Worſhip.

You obſerve, in the Place laſt quoted, ſpeaking of the Papiſts, "That ſome of their own "beſt Writers are ſo honeſt and ingenuous, as freely

" freely to declare, that if they are miſtaken " in the Article of Tranſubſtantiation, they " are certainly Idolaters." But ſure I am, *Sir*, that this *honeſt ingenuous Declaration* can be nothing at all to your Purpoſe: How the Papiſts miſtaking, or not miſtaking, in the Point of Tranſubſtantiation, ſhould any way affect the Caſe of Idolatry upon your Principles, is wonderfully myſterious; for, is it not, I beſeech you, as ſtupid and ſenſeleſs a Piece of Idolatry to worſhip *Fleſh* and *Blood*, as it is to worſhip *Bread and Wine?* or, can *one* Syſtem or Parcel of *Matter* claim, in this reſpect, any Preference to *another?* Perhaps you would allow it to be carrying the Matter a little too far to ſay, that Proteſtants worſhip and adore the Altar, or the conſecrated Elements of *Bread and Wine*, when they kneel before them; and you can have as little Reaſon to conclude, that the Papiſts, when they kneel before *the Hoſt*, pay their mental Adoration and Worſhip to a material ſenſeleſs Maſs of *Fleſh* and *Blood*. The Papiſts here are guilty of Idolatry, becauſe they reſolve their *religious Obedience* into an *undue Authority*; this, and this only, is the very Eſſence of *Idolatry*, whether the Object be conſidered as finite or infinite, divine or human. The worſhipping even the *true God*, by Means and Methods of mere *human Inſtitution* and *Appointment*, is doubtleſs *Idolatry*; in which Caſe the Idol or falſe God is the *Magiſtrate*, the *Prieſt*, the *Church*, or whoever beſides the *true God* claims an abſolute indiſputable Authority, that muſt not be examined, or ſubmitted to any farther or *higher Appeal*. The Popiſh Idolatry then, as I humbly conceive, does not conſiſt in worſhipping

Fleſh and *Blood*, or any bare *material Images*, but in worſhipping the *Church*, that is, the *Prieſts*, by an *abſolute blind Submiſſion*; and this is indeed a ſort of Idolatry, from which ſome Proteſtants are not ſo entirely free as one could wiſh. I ſhall not here ſtand to apply this Notion of Idolatry to particular Inſtances; but I will undertake at any Time to make it good, with reſpect to any Inſtance you can produce. Before, therefore, you can prove that your Adverſaries are Idolaters upon *Orthodox Principles*, you muſt ſhew either that the Honour and Obedience they pay to *Chriſt the Mediator*, is ſuch as God has not appointed and commanded, or elſe that obeying God in this Caſe is no Part of true Religion, or *divine Worſhip*.

But if you cannot prove the *Arians* guilty of Idolatry, in Conſequence of Orthodox Principles; you will ſtill inſiſt on it, that the Orthodox muſt certainly be Idolaters upon *Arian* Principles, becauſe they, *the Orthodox*, worſhip Chriſt as the ſupreme or *moſt high God*, who in their Adverſaries Opinion is but a *ſubordinate Being*. The Argument here is very pleaſant; you would needs be thought Idolaters, and are angry with your Adverſaries becauſe they have any Charity for you, and will not renounce your Communion. But this *Comick Prologue* is to introduce a *Tragedy*; and the Reaſon, it ſeems, why your Adverſaries charge you not with Idolatry is, becauſe they do not follow the *clear immediate and neceſſary Conſequences of their own Principles; and perhaps, becauſe they are afraid of the Temporal Inconveniencies that might enſue upon ſuch a Conduct.* Perhaps, you think that *Charity* is a Duty not at all incumbent upon you

you and your Orthodox Friends: 'Tis enough for ſome People to aſſume an Aire of Infallibility, and to pronounce as from the Throne of God, that no Man can poſſibly be honeſt or ſincere who is not of *their Mind*, or does not ſee the Clearneſs and Juſtneſs of their *Interpretations* and *Conſequences*. That Charity *which ſuffereth long, and is kind; envieth not, vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up; which doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provok'd, thinketh no Evil*, &c. I ſay, this ſort of Charity would certainly have induced you to conclude rather, that the Reaſon why your Adverſaries charge you not with Idolatry is, becauſe they verily believe, upon Grounds which are to them ſufficient, that you are not really guilty of it; and becauſe they cannot ſee thoſe Conſequences from their own Principles, which you are pleas'd to call *clear*, *immediate* and *neceſſary*. I muſt here ſolemnly proteſt to you, *Sir*, that this is my own Caſe; and that if I thought you really guilty of Idolatry, I ſhould not be afraid, upon the Account of any *Temporal Inconvenience*, to declare againſt you as ſuch, and to renounce your Communion. But whether I am miſtaken in this, or ought not upon *Arian* Principles to think otherwiſe, is the Point now to be debated.

I would not have you conclude, that I am here declaring for *Arianiſm*: But I am willing to put my ſelf in the Place of an *Arian* for once, to try the Force of your Argument; and whether an *Arian*, acting fairly upon his own Principles, muſt needs charge the Orthodox with Idolatry, and ſeparate from their Communion. The Orthodox, you ſay, worſhip Chriſt as the ſupreme God, or *God moſt high*, as God

of himself, infinite, eternal, omniscient, *&c.* which must therefore be an Object of Worship, essentially different from a subordinate derived Being. But, in the first Place, 'tis sufficiently notorious that this is not Orthodoxy, and that all the learned orthodox Writers have ever own'd that Christ is not God *absolutely supreme*, or *God most high*, or God in and of *himself*; but *God of God*, or God the *Son*, begotten of *the Father*, and who has some Way or other derived his whole Being and Perfection *from the Father*. It was never disputed betwixt the Orthodox and the *Arians*, whether Christ was an originated and derived Being; they all allow'd his Origination, and the Communication of his Being and Existence from the Father; and the only Dispute was about Eternity, and the Nature of the abstract Substance, which they knew nothing of, and concerning which the Scripture had declared nothing. Now it is simply and absolutely impossible, that an unoriginate and an originate, or a self-existent and a deriv'd Being, should be numerically the self-same Being; for nothing can be an express Contradiction, if this is not: And therefore, those who in this present Eighteen Hundredth Century talk of Christ's absolute Supremacy, or absolute Co-ordination with the Father, are departed from the Catholick Sense, and the universal Declaration of all Orthodox Churches, from the Beginning of Christianity down to this very Time; and if you are not satisfy'd in this, I refer you for full Conviction to Dr. *Waterland* and Mr. *Cumming*. Here then, you are setting up a new Doctrine of your own, peculiar to your self and a few private Friends; the

the Reſult, I ſuppoſe, of a new orthodox Junćto, in which Chriſtianity has been at length compleated by a few Winter Evenings Conferences: And while you are thus ſetting up for your ſelf and Mr. *Cumming*, in Oppoſition to all Chriſtian Churches, and all the Creeds and Confeſſions of Faith hitherto known in the World; 'tis but with an ill Grace, that you aſſume ſuch an *Aire of Aſſurance*, and give out your *infallible Dictates* concerning *Religious Worſhip* and *Idolatry*. But as I have taken ſome Notice of this already, and may have Occaſion to inſiſt on it farther under your Head of *Subſcription*, I ſhall diſmiſs it here, and purſue your Argument about Idolatry.

'Tis plain then, you muſt agree with your Adverſaries, that Chriſt is a ſubordinate Being: for you will not, I hope, deny the real Entity and Exiſtence of the *Man Chriſt Jeſus*, as eſſentially diſtinct from the *ſupreme God*; and you cannot certainly ſay, that *Jeſus of Nazareth*, or *the Man* born of the Virgin, is not *Chriſt*, becauſe this is expreſly aſſerted, and very often repeated in the New Teſtament. 'Tis plain likewiſe, that the *Man Chriſt* is *he whom God hath ordained to be Lord and Judge of Quick and Dead*; and that God has committed all Power and Judgment to the *Son of Man*, to *Chriſt* the *Mediator*, the authorized Meſſenger, the *anointed* of *God*. Here then it is, I preſume, paſt Diſpute, that you muſt ſubmit to the Juridiction of *Chriſt*, in this his *Mediatorial Capacity*, according to the Will and Appointment of *God the Father*, who has *ordain'd* and *anointed* him to this *Office*, and required us to reſpect and honour him as our one and only *Mediator*; and tho' this Ho-

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nour and Glory paid to *Chriſt, as Mediator*, may be eſſentially different from that which is due to the *ſupreme God*, with reſpect to the different Object, yet as 'tis reſolved into the ſame *ſupreme Authority* of the moſt *High God*, it is equally a Part of our *Religion* with any other Branch of *Divine* or *Religious Worſhip and Obedience*. And herein you muſt either agree with your Adverſaries, or ſet up a new Religion, never heard of, or known in the World before. But here you will ſay, that you do not only worſhip and honour the Man *Chriſt*, or *Chriſt as Man*, but you likewiſe worſhip and glorify *him* as *God moſt High*. But who do you here mean by *Chriſt?* Who is this whom you worſhip as the ſupreme or *moſt high God?* Not certainly the *Man Chriſt:* If you worſhip the *Man Chriſt*, as the ſupreme or moſt high God, you are indiſputably Idolaters; and if you, with your orthodox Friends, will ſtand to this, the *Arians*, and all *Chriſtians*, ſhall have my Conſent to ſeparate from your Communion. But 'tis plain, that by *Chriſt* here, you can mean only the *ſupreme God*; and then all that you ſay amounts to this, that you worſhip the *ſupreme God*, as the *ſupreme God*. And I beſeech you, are not your Adverſaries agreed with you herein? Or have you orthodox Gentlemen any other and different *ſupreme God* from the reſt of the World? I muſt here ask you, *Sir*, whether *Chriſt*, as God *moſt High*, is not the ſelf-ſame *moſt high God* with the *Father*, without any *eſſential Difference?* If you ſay he is not, you muſt make *two*, or rather *three moſt high Gods*, and *ſupreme Objects of Worſhip*, eſſentially different from *each other*; which being too groſs and abſurd, you will

will chuſe doubtleſs to ſay, that *Chriſt* is eſſentially the very ſelf-ſame moſt high God, and ſupreme Object of Worſhip with God the Father. The neceſſary Conſequence of which muſt be this, that whoever worſhips the Father as the one only living and true God, his *Worſhip* will be *eſſentially the ſame*, both in reference to the *Act* and *Object*, with yours. And therefore, to pretend in *this Caſe*, that you have any different *Object of Worſhip*, is to impoſe on your ſelf with Names inſtead of Things; and then to unchurch and anathematize your Brethren and Fellow-Chriſtians, becauſe they will not be impoſed on in the ſame Manner.

You ſuppoſe, that the moſt high God is three Perſons, or that the ſupreme God *himſelf* is *three Selfs*, three intelligent Agents, *i. e.* to make common Senſe of it, *three intelligent Beings*, or *active Subſtances*. Now, if you could make this Diſtinction intelligible, and free it from Contradiction, as I believe you cannot; yet ſtill it would reſt upon you to ſhew, that 'tis fundamental to Chriſtianity, and that no Man ought to be admitted to Chriſtian Communion who is not ſatisfied in it, and has not the ſame Notions about it that you have. But if you are from henceforth ſilent till you are able to do *this*, I never expect to hear from you more. If your Diſtinction, as above, gives you any different *Notions and Ideas* of *God*, as an *Object of Worſhip*, you are exceedingly to blame in not producing and laying them before the World; but if you have *no ſuch*, you are ſtill more to blame for pretending to it. When you have ſettled any clear determinate Meaning to the Words *God* and *Chriſt*, your whole Hypotheſis will

will vaniſh into Air and empty Sound. 'Tis evident, that the Name *Chriſt* ſtands ſometimes with you for the *ſupreme God*, and ſometimes for a *true* and *proper Man*: But you cannot ſay, that the *one true God* is a *true and proper Man*, or that a true and proper *Man* is the one *true God*; and 'tis manifeſt, that *theſe Two* muſt be infinitely different, and eſſentially diſtinct *Beings*, *Agents*, *Perſons*, or what you will: And therefore, in your next, I hope you will clear up this *grand Point* in another Manner than you have yet done; I am ſure 'tis what you ought to do, before you proceed farther with ſuch ſort of Clamour, to diſtract and divide the miſerable Churches: for, whatever you imagine, *Sir*, it is not this airy Jingle, and School-play with *Words*, that will ever be ſufficient to eſtabliſh the Practice of true Religion, or to diſtinguiſh real Chriſtians and ſound Believers from Hereticks and Infidels. What has been ſaid may, I preſume, be ſufficient to take off the mutual Charge of Idolatry, which you would have the contending Parties bring againſt each other; at leaſt, I hope they will live peaceably together, and continue in Chriſtian Communion, till you have better clear'd up your Pretenſions to Argument and Reaſon upon this Point.

I ſhall now therefore proceed to examine, and make ſome Remarks upon, the remaining Parts of your Diſcourſe: for tho' I can ſee nothing but what has been already ſufficiently conſider'd and reply'd to, in other Writings; yet ſince it appears, by the Warmth and Zeal you diſcover, that you look upon what you ſay to be of the utmoſt Conſequence, I would not

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be thought to ſlight a Gentleman of your Character and Reputation in the learned World, as if you had offered any Thing not worth a farther Conſideration. Do not miſtake me, *Sir*, as if I was here confeſſedly putting my ſelf to a needleſs Trouble, by removing Objections which have been ſufficiently clear'd and obviated already; for I muſt own, that I am determined herein, not by my *own Judgment*, but *yours*.

You have generouſly, as I have obſerved before, given up the coercive Power of the Magiſtrate in Matters purely Religious; where Mens Opinions are ſuch, as do not either in themſelves, or in the Manner of contending for them, endanger the publick Peace and Safety, you think very juſtly, that Men ought not to be puniſhed for them. But after all, you put the Queſtion concerning the Civil Juriſdiction with a viſible Partiality, as if the Power of the Magiſtrate in this Caſe might not equally be employ'd againſt the *Orthodox*, as againſt *Hereticks*, when they grow turbulent and unpeaceable about their Opinions. Your Words are theſe, *p.* 25. "Here a great Queſtion will a-"riſe, whether God has inveſted the Magi-"ſtrate with a Power to interpoſe coercively "for the Preſervation of the publick Peace, "when contumacious and inſolent *Hereticks* in-"volve the Nation in turbulent Contentions "and Party-Rage, which manifeſtly ſhake and "endanger the Government? When Eccleſi-"aſtick Strife and Faction is carried on to "ſuch a Height, the Magiſtrate, whoſe Duty "it is to protect the State, muſt be ſuppoſed "to be entruſted with ſufficient Power to do

"his

" his Duty; and therefore, if the Repoſe and " Safety of the State are greatly threatned, as " before deſcrib'd, he is certainly empower'd " to prevent the Danger; and if no other than " coercive Means are capable of procuring his " End, they muſt be allow'd as lawful. But " how far this coercive Force may be extended, " and with what Limits it is circumſcribed, is " a Point not ſo eaſy to be determin'd." I fear, *Sir*, the Difficulty of Determination here, ariſes chiefly from a ſecret Reſerve you have made in favour of your own Party; for otherwiſe I ſee nothing in the Caſe that could have much perplex'd you. Your Manner of Expreſſion, certainly gives one ſome Ground for this Suſpicion. But whatever may be doubtful in the Point, this I think is clear, that the Power of the Magiſtrate extends equally to all Religious Parties without Exception. Let Mens *Opinions* be what they will, *true* or *falſe*, *right* or *wrong*, the Magiſtrate has an equal Right, and is equally obliged, to puniſh and reſtrain *thoſe*, who contend for them in ſuch a Manner, as by their outward Practice to break and deſtroy the publick Peace, and endanger the Government. Now 'tis paſt all Diſpute, that the boldeſt Pretenders to Orthodoxy may be, and often are, as imperious and turbulent, as factious and ſchiſmatical, and as hurtful and deſtructive to the Government, in the Methods they take for promoting their Opinions, as any Hereticks in the World. And therefore, if inſtead of *contumacious and inſolent Hereticks*, one ſhould put *contumacious and inſolent Pretenders to Truth and Orthodoxy*; I hope you will allow that the Caſe would be ſtill the ſame; and that as the Magiſtrate

ſtrate has an equal *Right*, ſo it muſt be equally his *Duty*, to preſerve the publick Peace, and the Safety of the State, againſt the *one*, as well as againſt the *other*: Which being ſuppoſed and granted, I readily profeſs my Agreement with you in this Point; and am willing to leave the Magiſtrate, upon this impartial View, to apply his coercive Power, as he ſhall find Occaſion.

Having thus briefly diſpatched the Buſineſs of Civil Juriſdiction, you proceed next to the Affairs of the *Church*, and endeavour to ſettle the proper and neceſſary Method for the Conviction and Excommunication of *Hereticks*. I intirely agree with you, that ſince it is our Duty to ſeparate from Hereticks, and not to hold religious Communion with them, a Heretick muſt be one who is capable of being detected, and judicially proceeded againſt; for it would, indeed, be ridiculous in the laſt Degree, to ſay, that we are bound in Conſcience to avoid Perſons, whom we cannot poſſibly know or find out. And yet this is your Diſtreſs in the Caſe of Hereſy, as you have here managed the Matter. You place Hereſy in inward ſpeculative Opinions, as abſtracted from any outward heretical Practice; and then you have no other Way to *convict the Heretick*, but by extorting Confeſſions from him, and making him plead guilty againſt your *own Law*, while you ſit upon him *as Judge*. A Method of Procedure the moſt unjuſt and infamous of any in the World, and ſuch as was never allow'd in any Court but that of a *popiſh Inquiſition!* In all other Methods of judicial Proceſs among Men, the Perſon accuſed, or ſuſpected, is firſt to be proved guilty

guilty by judicial Evidence, or credible capable Witneſſes, atteſting upon their own Knowledge to the Truth of the Facts for which he is accuſed; and no Man is obliged to impeach and condemn himſelf: But here is a more refined Method of Judgment ſet up, by which fallible Creatures are enabled to aſſume the Prerogatives of *Chriſt*, and exerciſe a *ſpiritual* and *divine Juriſdiction* over the Hearts and Conſciences of their *Fellow Chriſtians*. For here, as you can have no Evidence but *Confeſſion*, ſo even that *Confeſſion* cannot be proved *Heretical*, without knowing the Perſon's Heart: For ſhould you be ſuppoſed infallibly in the right your ſelf, yet he who differs from you may be ſincerely and innocently miſtaken, for any Thing you can poſſibly know, or prove againſt him. You muſt here give me leave to ask, Whether you would take your Oath in a Court of Judicature, that your Opinion about the Trinity is certainly right; and that another, who is not of your Mind in the Caſe, cannot be fit by the *Laws of Chriſt* for Chriſtian Communion? If you, or any of your orthodox Friends, cannot ſwear to the Truth of this in Fact; with what Reaſon or Equity can you ſit in Judgment againſt another upon it, when you may as well, and are as likely to be miſtaken, as your condemned excommunicated Brother?

It muſt be obſerved here, that the Queſtion is *this*, whether fallible uninſpired Men have any Authority from Chriſt, to ſettle and determine any Thing as a fundamental *Article of Faith*, or as neceſſary to *Salvation* and *Chriſtian Communion*, which the Holy Ghoſt has not *clearly*, *expreſly*, and *definitively* declared as ſuch *in Scripture*?

Scripture? Or if you will, whether the ordinary Miniſters of the Goſpel have any Right to ſet up their own *Interpretations and Conſequences*, as neceſſary Terms of Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, where Chriſt and the Apoſtles have made no ſuch particular Determinations *in Scripture?* The Affirmative of this is the Doctrine which you maintain; and the only Condition, it ſeems, upon which you will have any Chriſtian Peace, Charity or Communion. He who cannot admit of *this*, muſt not be allow'd to be of *your Religion*; becauſe, in your Opinion, he ſaps the very Foundations of all Chriſtian Faith and Practice, and leaves no Room for the Conviction and Extermination of *Hereticks*, no poſſibility of guarding the Church againſt *damnable Error*: ſince all, even the very worſt of Hereticks, will ſubſcribe the *Scriptures*; and conſequently, if *Theſe* be allow'd as a *ſufficient Teſt*, it will be impoſſible to with-hold our Communion from *Hereticks*, as the Goſpel requires. This is your Doctrine, and thus you ſupport it. Hereticks, you ſay wreſt and pervert the Scripture to their own Deſtruction. Well, be it ſo; and what then is the Remedy? Why, to prevent ſuch an Abuſe, the true Senſe of Scripture muſt be explain'd and limitted. Explain'd and limitted, by whom I beſeech you? Why truly, by fallible uninſpired Men, who are as liable and as likely to miſtake and wreſt the *true Senſe* of Scripture, as any of thoſe for whom they are contriving Teſts, and excluding under the Name of *Hereticks*: And yet, fallible and uninſpired as they are, we muſt ſuppoſe them, in your Way, to be *wiſer* and *more merciful than God*, and capable of delivering the

Mind and Will of God, in Terms more clear, expreſs, and unexceptionable, than the *Holy Ghoſt* has done. Thoſe who have made this exorbitant Claim, and pretended to explain and define the Senſe of Scripture, in Things neceſſary to Salvation, clearer than the inſpired Writers, under the Direction of the Holy Ghoſt, have always in Fact darkened and perplex'd the Doctrines of the Goſpel, inſtead of clearing and explaining them; and thoſe few moſt plain and ſimple Articles of Faith, which the Scripture truly declares as Fundamental, and Neceſſary, have been rendered abſolutely unintelligible, by that Time our infallible *Creed-makers* have ſufficiently *limitted* and *explained them.*

The Sum and Subſtance of Chriſtianity, according to the Plan of the preſent Orthodoxy, is now reduced to two Propoſitions.

1. That the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are three intelligent Agents, in one *undivided Subſtance*, or *Eſſence*; which *one Subſtance*, or Eſſence, makes them *One God.*

2. That the *Man Chriſt*, or *Jeſus of Nazareth*, and the *ſupreme* or moſt *high God*, do both together conſtitute the one ſingle *Perſon of Chriſt*; and that the *Man Chriſt*, or Jeſus of *Nazareth*, never was *a human Perſon.*

And who now muſt define your Definitions, and explain your Explications of Scripture? For nothing, certainly, in the Scripture it ſelf, can ſo much need a farther Explication as *this.* Nay, when you have thus limitted and defined the Senſe of Scripture, it will be impoſſible you ſhould ever prove, that it is indeed the Senſe of Scripture, or that you have not loſt the *true Senſe* in the *pretended Explication.* Suppoſe

poſe now, I ſhould be willing, upon reaſonable Terms, to ſubſcribe the Scripture in *your Senſe*, or to liſt my ſelf into *your Party*; what Security can you give me, that *your Senſe* is the *true Senſe*, or *any Senſe*? I preſume, you would not ſecure me upon *Oath*, and I am under ſome Difficulties againſt taking your *Word for it*. And therefore, ſince I cannot poſſibly be convinced by your *Arguments*, I hope you will ſuſpend the Sentence of Hereſy and Excommunication, till you have clear'd the Matter a little farther.

But let us ſuppoſe that your human Creed or Teſt, whatever it be, contains the *true Senſe of Scripture*; yet ſtill I cannot ſee how it ſhould be any Remedy againſt Hereſy, or any Means of detecting the Heretick, more than the Scripture it ſelf. Hereticks, you ſay, will readily ſubſcribe the Scriptures, tho' in an unſcriptural Senſe; and what then ſhould hinder them from ſubſcribing human Teſts and Creeds in the ſame Manner? If they will deal treacherouſly with the *Word of God*, why not with the *Words of Men*? You muſt certainly ſuppoſe a Heretick to be a *Hypocrite* and a *Deceiver*, and one who is *ſelf-condemned* in his *Hypocriſy*, as deſignedly acting *a treacherous Part*; for I hope you will not ſay, that a good and *ſincere Chriſtian* may be *an Heretick*. A Perſon ſincerely diſpoſed to know the Truth in order to Practice, tho' he may be *miſtaken*, yet he cannot be *an Heretick*: For if a bare Miſtake of *Judgment*, without any *evil Intention*, be *Hereſy*; let thoſe who condemn their Brethren upon this Foot, look to themſelves, and tremble to think with what Face they will ſtand before the Judge, in the Day of their Accounts! But ſince it is plain,

that the moral Wickedneſs of the Heart, or an evil and treacherous Intention, join'd with the *Error* of *Judgment*, is neceſſary to conſtitute *an Heretick*; 'tis evident, that this muſt diſpoſe the Man to ſubſcribe any Creed or Confeſſion of Faith whatever, whether ſcriptural or unſcriptural, divine or human, if he finds it for his Turn and Intereſt. And therefore, your boaſted Method of Security can ſerve only to brand and exclude from the Communion of the Church, honeſt and good Men, or ſuch as act upon Principles of Conſcience, and from the religious Fear of God; but can be of no Uſe or Service at all againſt *real Hereticks*. 'Tis plain, there can be no Teſt againſt inward Heart-Hypocriſy, *as ſuch*; and when the evil Intention ſhall appear in any outward ill Practice, contrary to the Obligations of Chriſtianity, and the Laws of the Goſpel, there will be no need of any *other Teſt*; but you may then, by the Conſent of all good Men, avoid the Hetetick, and exclude him from your Communion as ſoon as you pleaſe, if he refuſes to reform his *evil Practice* upon *ſufficient Admonition*.

But 'tis pretended, that *all Churches*, in common with all other *voluntary Societies*, muſt have an undoubted Right to ſettle their own Terms of Communion; and in Conſequence of this, to require of all their Members a Conformity of Judgment to certain *human Teſts*, and Standards of Faith and Orthodoxy; without which, they are not to be admitted to the Communion of that particular Church. Hence you tell us, *p.* 22. "It is ſtrange, *even to Admiration*, that "Men ſhould believe that to be an Impoſi-"tion, which is only a Mark, or Teſtimony,

"of

" of a Perſon's Qualification to be a Member " of a Chriſtian Society, which the Perſon to " whom it is propoſed may comply with, or " refuſe, without incurring any Penalty. Have " not all Civil Societies of what Denomination " ſoever, all voluntary Cabals and Aſſemblies " of Men, ſome Rules and Orders which the " Members engage to obſerve? And if any " are deny'd Admiſſion, or excluded, becauſe " they refuſed this Qualification, may they " therefore complain of unwarrantable Impoſi- " tions?"

You muſt give me leave, *Sir*, here in my Turn, to obſerve it with *Wonder*, that a *learned Proteſtant* ſhould place *Chriſtian Churches* upon the ſame Foundation with *Civil voluntary Societies*, which are of mere *human Inſtitution*, and ſubſiſt purely upon their *own Conſtitutions and Laws*. I deny that *Chriſtian Churches* are *voluntary Societies*, in the Senſe you refer to, or that they have any Power to conſtitute their own Terms of Communion. It is not left to the Determination of *Chriſtian Churches* what ſhall be the Conditions of admitting, or excluding, their *own Members*, as is the Caſe in all *Civil voluntary Societies*; and your ſuppoſing this, muſt involve you in Conſequences equally abſurd and Anti-chriſtian with Popery it ſelf. Nothing, I think, can be more evident than this, that Chriſtians are not left to their Liberty, whether they will reſolve themſelves into particular Churches and worſhipping Aſſemblies, or not; nor are they even then at Liberty to determine what the Terms of Communion, or the Conditions of Admiſſion and Excluſion, ſhall be. Theſe Things are all antecedently fix'd and determined for the whole

Catholick Church, by *Christ himself*; which no particular Church can have any Right to ſuperſede or alter. That particular Church cannot certainly be any Part of the true Catholick Church, whoſe Terms of Communion are not Catholick, and who exclude Men from their religious Fellowſhip and Worſhip, on the Account of *any Thing*, for which Chriſt will not exclude them from the *Kingdom of Heaven*. I take it to be one of the firſt Principles of Chriſtianity, and without which 'tis impoſſible the Laws of Chriſt ſhould be ever put in Execution, that there is no mere *human Authority*, or legiſlative Power, in the Church; and therefore I fear, your *Independent By-Laws* are often made in bar of the *divine Charter*.

But you ſay, if a Perſon is excluded from a particular Communion, becauſe he cannot ſubmit to their Terms, there is no Harm done; for if he cannot comply, he is at Liberty to refuſe; which he may do without incurring *any Penalty*. You, I think, are the firſt *Diſciplinarian*, who has ever ſaid that *Excommunication* is *no Penalty*. If Excluſion be *no Penalty*, it muſt I ſuppoſe follow, that *Admiſſion* is *no Privilege*; and that the Perſon who refuſes to comply with their Terms of Communion, is guilty of *no Fault*; which yet, methinks, ſhould be no great Compliment to any *Chriſtian Church*. But by *no Penalty*, here, perhaps you mean no *civil Penalty*; or that the Diſſenter, or Perſon excommunicated, is not fined, impriſoned, or put to Death. But *theſe Penalties*, you know, are not always in the *Church's Power*; and therefore, if not always Inflicted in ſuch Caſes, this, perhaps, may be no Thanks to *the Church*. But

if you can name me any Church, who, having the Advantage of the civil Law, has not made uſe of it to enforce her ſpiritual Cenſures, I ſhall own it as a very conſiderable Diſcovery. The Church, you muſt allow, has a Power to inflict ſpiritual Cenſures and Penalty, ſuch as giving Men over to *Satan*, branding them for Hereticks, marking them out for Reprobation, warning all Chriſtians to avoid their Society and Converſation, and not to ſhew them any Marks of Friendſhip or Charity, but to look upon them as abandoned Wretches, and Enemies to God and the Souls of Men. Now all this, or whatever may be the Conſequence of it, has doubtleſs nothing penal in it; and the Church Executioner, after all, will be ready to waſh his Hands, and declare in the *Name of God*, that he is perfectly innocent; and that he has not intended the leaſt Hurt, or done the leaſt Injury, to his *Brother*. Now it will be ſufficient in your Way to juſtify a Man, in all this Barbarity and Outrage againſt another Chriſtian who differs from him in Judgment, if the *Zealot* has but a *common Aſſurance* that he is *actually* in the Right, and can but out-face *God* and the *World*, while he is violating all the Laws of *Nature* and *Chriſtianity*.

But in Oppoſition to your Method of convicting and exterminating Hereticks, I ſhall now endeavour to prove, that the only Teſt of *Chriſtian Faith and Orthodoxy*, ſo far as it falls under any human Cognizance and Juriſdiction, is *Chriſtian Practice*; and that to inſiſt on any other Teſt in a Way of human Juriſdiction, muſt be attended with all the fatal Conſequences of Popiſh Infallibility, and Anti-Chriſtian Tyranny.

ny. I ſhall here lay it down as a Principle, which, I think, cannot be conteſted, that *there is no neceſſary Connexion betwixt Speculation and Practice of any Sort or Kind whatever; but the Speculation may be right, where the Practice is wrong; and on the contrary, the Practice may be right, where the Judgment in Speculation or Theory is wrong.* However, it muſt not be concluded from hence, that a *right Practice* can be determined and directed without Judgment; for *that Judgment* which has an immediate neceſſary Connexion with *the Practice*, is certainly right where the Practice is right, and wrong if the Practice be wrong. Therefore, to avoid Confuſion and Miſtake, I muſt here diſtinguiſh between the *ſpeculative* and the *practical* Judgment: I call that the ſpeculative Judgment, which determines concerning the bare abſtract Truth or Falſhood of *Propoſitions*; and the practical Judgment is that, which determines concerning the Reaſonableneſs or Unreaſonableneſs, the Fitneſs or Unfitneſs of Actions, as they fall under the Power and Command of the Will. If we take the World as we find it, and conſider Mankind as they really are, it will appear, that their abſtract Notions and Speculations of Things are almoſt infinitely and unavoidably different; they depend upon ſuch different Capacities, Talents, Means and Opportunities, as to be very little the Matter of their Choice, or under the Conduct and Direction of the Will. Some Men, merely for want of natural Capacities, can never arrive at that Accuracy and Exactneſs of Judgment, which others obtain with Eaſe; and ſome again, without any Superiority of Genius, or Merit of their own, have their ſpeculative

Views

Views wonderfully extended and enlarged, and are ſet vaſtly above the common Level of Mankind, merely by the Lot of their Birth, Education, and other providential Incidents. Now from hence, there muſt ariſe an unavoidable Difference in Mens ſpeculative Notions and Conceptions of Things; and where they uſe the *ſame Words*, without ſuſpecting a *different Senſe*, they will yet mean at moſt but partly the *ſame Thing*.

A Philoſopher's Notion and Idea of *the Sun*, is as different from the Notion or Idea of an ignorant Countryman, when he uſes the *ſame Word*, as the Idea of a Candle or Lamp, is from that of a burning World, or a vaſt Globe of liquid glowing Fire. Now, muſt it not appear extremely unreaſonable and abſurd in this Caſe, ſhould the Philoſopher fall foul upon the poor Countryman, for his falſe miſtaken Notion of *the Sun*; telling him, that he is a ſtupid, groveling, unthankful Wretch, and that by his falſe Judgment concerning *the Sun*, he undervalues that *glorious Luminary*, and is not therefore worthy or fit to enjoy *its Light*.

But this, and other like Inſtances, may be thought perhaps not ſo much to the Purpoſe; and therefore I ſhall apply the Caſe to Things of a moral and religious Nature, in which every one muſt perceive its Force. The Belief of a God, is doubtleſs the Foundation of all Religion; and therefore, if a right Notion, or ſpeculative Judgment concerning any Object, be ſuppoſed neceſſary, it muſt certainly be ſo with Reſpect to the Nature, the eſſential Attributes, and Perfections of God: And yet, let the above-mentioned plain Countryman, how pious

and

and religious ſoever, be examined in theſe Matters upon any Principles that are ſtrictly true in the Nature and Reaſon of Things; and I dare engage for it, that his Notions and Apprehenſions concerning *God*, and the *divine Perfections*, ſhall be found in many Reſpects as inaccurate, and as far from being juſt or true, as are his Notions and Ideas concerning the *Sun*, a *Star*, or any other mere *natural Object*: And yet, while his Notion and Belief of God is ſuch, as determine him practically to a religious Fear and Truſt, Obedience and Love, it is ſufficient to anſwer his Purpoſe as a Chriſtian, and available enough for the Salvation of his Soul. Now, tho' in this Caſe, the Man's ſpeculative Miſtakes and Errors concerning the Nature and Perfections of God, might be ſuch as, being ſtrictly purſued, would be inconſiſtent in their neceſſary Conſequences with the Being and Perfections of God; yet theſe ſpeculative Errors and their Conſequences cannot be imputed to him, ſo as to hinder his Salvation and Acceptance, while they do not hinder his practical Obedience, Love, and Dependance upon God: and to ſay otherwiſe, is to proceed upon a Principle, which, in its neceſſary Conſequences, muſt equally exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven all Mankind without Exception, and render the Chriſtian Revelation of no Uſe or Signification at all. I am perſwaded, there is no Speculatiſt, how conceited or refined ſoever, but what has ſome ſpeculative Error, ſome wrong Notion or other concerning God; he aſcribes ſome Things to him as Perfections, which really are not ſo, and cannot belong to him; and denies other Things

of

of God as Imperfections, which in Truth are not ſuch. Now ſhould any ſuch ſpeculative Error, or Miſtake of Judgment, be purſued in its natural neceſſary Conſequences, it muſt be found abſolutely inconſiſtent with the Being and Perfections of God. And in this Way, there is no Man but might by neceſſary Conſequence, from ſome Miſtake or falſe Notion or other concerning God, be proved to be an Atheiſt. But the Abſurdity and Injuſtice of ſuch a Method, as deſtructive of all Charity, and all Religion, muſt be too viſible to need any long Debate about it.

The Belief of the Reſurrection, of the future Judgment, and of the Rewards and Puniſhments of another World, are undoubtedly fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith; and yet, I think, it cannot be deny'd, but Mens ſpeculative Notions and Apprehenſions about theſe Matters, are as various and different, as about any of the moſt common and indifferent Matters in the World. Now, let but proper Teſts be prepared to oblige all Men, as the Condition of their Church-Communion, to believe the Reſurrection, the laſt Judgment, the Happineſs of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell, preciſely in the *ſame Senſe*; and Mens unavoidably different Judgment and Opinions concerning theſe Things will ſoon appear, together with the Impoſſibility of uniting them by any ſuch Method, as well as the Vanity, Abſurdity and Arrogance of pretending to it.

That Man's Faith muſt certainly be *true* and *ſaving*, which determines him practically to the ſeveral Duties and Obligations of *Chriſtianity*; and ſerves to work him up into a divine and heavenly

heavenly Diſpoſition, in Conformity to the *holy Nature* and *Will of God*, tho' he may have different Notions and Apprehenſions concerning the ſeveral Matters and Objects of his Faith, from thoſe of *another Man*, who may yet agree *with him* in the ſame *common Practice* of *Chriſtianity*. I know, every *Zealot* will be ready to cry up his ſpeculative *Scheme* and *Theory*, as having the moſt immediate and direct Influence upon *Chriſtian Practice*: and while it has this Influence upon his *own Practice*, it is well; but let him not conclude from hence, that another Man may not be determined to the *ſame Practice*, under different *Notions and Apprehenſions of Things*.

The *Antinomians* and *Arminians* have differed very conſiderably about ſome of the moſt material Points of ſpeculative *Belief*; and yet, I think, he muſt be a moſt hopeleſs and incurable Bigot indeed, who will not allow, that there have been, and ſtill are, very good Chriſtians on *both Sides*. The Devil has certainly a more true and adequate Notion of the *Nature* and *Perfections* of *God*, and of the ſeveral fundamental Articles of the *Chriſtian Faith*, than any *Creed-Makers* can pretend to; and *the Diſciples* had but an indifferent Underſtanding concerning *our Saviour*, and the Nature of his *Kingdom*, when they expected Preferment under him as a *Civil Sovereign* or *Temporal Prince*: and yet, I imagine, no Body will ſay, either that the *Devil* may be ſaved by his *Orthodoxy*, or that the *Diſciples* were in a damnable State for their miſtaken *Judgment*.

For my own Part, I am fully and clearly perſwaded, that the *Athanaſian Scheme* relating to the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*, is unſcriptural and

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ſelf-contradictory; and that, purſued in its juſt and neceſſary Conſequences, it muſt overthrow the *whole Chriſtian Revelation*: yet I dare not charge an *Athanaſian* with theſe Conſequences, as if they made up a Part of his real Belief, or were indeed intended by him; for when he profeſſes that he does not ſee them, I think my ſelf bound in Charity to believe that he *cannot*, and therefore is not obliged to *ſee them*; eſpecially when I obſerve him practiſing all the Duties, and ſubmitting to the ſeveral Obligations of Chriſtianity, I muſt neceſſarily own him as a Brother and Fellow-Chriſtian. If he will not extend the ſame Charity to me, I cannot help it; but have this however to comfort me, that he is not to be my Judge; and tho' he may preſume to cenſure and condemn me here, yet I expect, and appeal to, a more righteous Judge another Day.

After all, I preſume you muſt allow, that he who ſhall profeſs to believe the Scriptures, as the certain infallible Word of God, and the only Rule of Chriſtian Faith and Practice; and that he uſes his beſt Endeavours to underſtand them right, and to live accordingly: I ſay, you muſt allow ſuch a one to be duly qualify'd for Chriſtian Communion, provided he be ſincere in this *Profeſſion*, and his *Practice* does not contradict it. Now, 'tis evident, that outward Profeſſion and Practice is all that can poſſibly fall under any *human Cognizance* or *Juriſdiction*. But a Man's Practice will have no need of any Teſt to diſcover it, that being open and viſible to the whole World; and as for the Sincerity of his Profeſſion or Practice, that cannot poſſibly be diſcovered without knowing the

Heart.

Heart. Now, when you ſuſpect a Man of ſubſcribing the Scripture inſincerely, and then offer him a human Teſt to ſubſcribe; 'tis plain, that this can neither remove nor diſcover his Inſincerity: and therefore, I fear that this is a mere Pretence, and that there is commonly ſomething elſe in it, not ſo proper to be own'd. When you have thus rejected a Profeſſion and Practice purely upon the Foot of *Scripture*, as an inſufficient *Teſt of Chriſtianity*; you have nothing elſe to do, but to ſet up your *own private Judgment* and Senſe of *Scripture*, as the univerſal Teſt and Standard of all *Chriſtian Faith* and *Orthodoxy*: In which there is this remarkable Piece of *Injuſtice*, that while you declare the Scripture to be the only Rule of *your Faith*, you will not allow it to be ſo with reſpect to *other Men*. The Scripture is your only Rule, but your Judgment and Senſe of Scripture muſt be the only Rule to every Body elſe, or otherwiſe you will have nothing to do with them in the Way of Chriſtian Communion, Peace, and Charity.

If you ſhould pretend, that 'tis not your *own Senſe*, but the *Catholick Senſe*, or the *Senſe* of the *Church*, that you inſiſt upon; I hope you would urge the Authority of the Church in this Caſe only in jeſt, and that you do not in good earneſt believe implicitly as the Church believes. If your Faith has been grounded upon Scripture, in Conſequence of a fair Examination, this Faith muſt be the ſame, while the Ground of it is the ſame, whether the Church ſhould agree with you or not: And therefore, it is ſimply and purely your *own Senſe*, and nothing elſe, that you muſt, upon your Principles, ſet

up

up as the universal Test and Standard of *Orthodoxy* and *Christian Communion.* Now, for the same Reason, and upon the same Principles, every Man else will have an equal Right to set up his own Sense in the same Manner, whatever it be; for I imagine you would be extremely hard put to it, to assign any Reason or Pretence, in order to justify this Method in *your self*, and your *own Party*, that must not equally justify it in *all other Parties*, whatever *their Opinions* are. And this gives one, at once, a full View of the peculiar Excellency and Advantages of your happy Scheme; and how glorious a State of Religion that must be, where this Principle should be put in Practice in all its natural and most obvious Consequences! Who can express the universal Madness, Outrage and Confusion, that must ensue upon it? It must put the Church into as bad a Circumstance, as *Hobbes*'s State of Nature; and no two Churches upon Earth could maintain Christian Communion with each other; and even the particular Members of every individual Church must necessarily be divided and torn from one another, from the Catholick Church, and from Christ himself, as often as they should prepare *new Tests*, to reduce the *general* Doctrines of Scripture to every Man's particular Interpretations and Consequences. Nay, where the Scripture is supposed to need any *explanatory Test*, as a *Rule of Faith*, that *very Test* will as much need *another* to explain it, and that again *another*, and so on *in infinitum.* And nothing can prevent this universal endless Confusion, but an universal Lethargy, a stupid blind Obedience, and implicit Faith. And indeed, in this Case,

Popery

Popery it ſelf muſt be thought a *proper Remedy*, and a much more eligible State of Things, than ſuch a *publick Juriſdiction* lodg'd in every *private Breaſt*. This is the very Thing that has hitherto divided and diſtracted the *Chriſtian Church*; and that muſt e'er this Time have crumbled it into Duſt and Atoms, had not God, in his merciful and good Providence, prevented it, by reſtraining the *Spirit of Impoſition*, which muſt otherwiſe have naturally produced *ſuch an Effect*. Every Council that has ſince ſate in the Chriſtian World, have had as good a Right to make forty *New Creeds*, as the Council of *Nice* had to make *that one*; nay, every *particular Church* or *private Perſon* have as good a Right as any of them: And, that this has not been done, is owing, not to the Principle it ſelf, which muſt terminate in it, but either to *Prudence*, or *Policy*, or *blind Submiſſion*.

Perhaps you will ſay, that at this rate it muſt follow, that the Scripture-Revelation has no determinate Senſe at all, even in fundamental *Articles of Faith*, but every one may underſtand *them* differently, and yet be good Chriſtians. To which I anſwer, that the Scripture has a clear determinate Senſe enough, with reſpect to the *general Principles and Doctrines*, to which the Revelation is confin'd; and which is ſufficient to anſwer all the Ends and Purpoſes of *true Religion*. But if you will go farther, and carry the certain infallible *Word of God* beyond the plain expreſs *Declarations of God*; thoſe interpretative Inferences and Deductions muſt needs be different, according to Mens different Capacities, Apprehenſions, Opportunities, and

Ways

Ways of Thinking, and none of them can be the certain infallible *Word of God*: They will all be the uncertain fallible Conſequences and *Opinions of Men*; ſome of which, perhaps, may be demonſtrated to be *falſe*, but not one of them will ever be demonſtrated to be *true*.

I ſhall here endeavour to explain this, by an Inſtance or two. God has declared, that there will be a Reſurrection of the Dead; that he will raiſe both the Juſt and Unjuſt, to ſtand before Chriſt in Judgment, and to paſs under an impartial Trial and righteous Sentence, in order to the vaſt eternal Rewards and Puniſhments of another World. Now all this is plain and intelligible enough, and ſufficient to determine Men to a good Life, if they will be duly influenced by it, under the Cognizance and Inſpection of the ſupreme Judge. But if you will carry Matters beyond the general Principles and expreſs Declarations of Scripture, you may make a thouſand Determinations, and draw an infinite Number of diſtinct and different Conſequences, none of which can be the *Word of God*, or any *Part of Scripture*; and therefore, ſhould you reſolve them into neceſſary Articles of Faith, and require them to be believed as the Terms of your Communion, you muſt herein place your ſelf in the Room of God, and require a Submiſſion not to the *Authority of God*, but to your *own Authority*.

Thus, ſhould you pretend to paſs it into an Article of Faith, that the *ſame Bodies* ſhall be raiſed in this or that determinate Senſe of your own; as with the ſame numerical Particles they conſiſted of when laid in the Grave, or with the ſame numerical Particles they poſſeſſed

when the Soul departed; or ſhould you declare that God always interpoſes by a miraculous Power to hinder any ſubſtantial Part of one *dead Body* from becoming ſucceſſively a ſubſtantial Part of *another*; you might, by ſuch a Method, diſcover Preſumption enough, and procure ſufficient Hatred, or Contempt, from thoſe who cannot be of your Mind, and who may apprehend themſelves ill treated by your Impoſitions; but you can never, in this Way, clear up the Scriptures, or promote the Cauſe of true Religion. 'Tis declared, that the Bodies of Men after the Reſurrection will be *ſpiritual* and *incorruptible*: Now, that they will be then made fit and proper Inſtruments for the more ſpiritual and refin'd Operation of the Soul, and will not be ſubject to any of thoſe continual Decays to which they are now liable, is eaſy to conceive, and what every one will readily agree in; but when we come to any farther particular Determinations and Conſequences, 'tis impoſſible but Men muſt have different Apprehenſions, and form different Concluſions and Judgments, about the Nature, Exiſtence, and Properties of ſpiritual incorruptible Bodies.

Again, 'tis expreſly declared, that the Father and Son are *one*; for theſe are Chriſt's own Words, *I and my Father are one.* Now 'tis plain from expreſs Declarations of Scripture, and what every Body will agree to, that they are one in Teſtimony, Conſent, and Will; that they have one Intereſt and Deſign; and that they perfectly agree in all their Declarations concerning the Duty and Happineſs of Mankind. If any one here ſhould aſſert, and pretend to prove by Conſequences, that the Unity

muſt

must denote ſomething farther, and particularly that they are *one in Subſtance* and *Eſſence*, *one ſupreme independent ſelf-exiſtent Being*, or one moſt *high God*, he will be involved under inſuperable Difficulties, from which he will never be able to extricate himſelf; and therefore, ſhould his Opinion be intelligible and poſſible, or even *true*, yet he can never make it *ſo clear* and *evident* as to render all Men inexcuſable, and wickedly inſincere, who cannot ſee it; and without which, ſhould it be ever ſo *true*, it would be equally preſumptuous and ridiculous, to ſuppoſe it a univerſally neceſſary and fundamental Article of the *Chriſtian Faith*.

The like may be ſaid of that other famous and diſputed Text, concerning *the Three* who bear *Record* in Heaven: For ſuppoſing the Text to be true and genuine, all that can with Clearneſs be deduced from it, is this, that they are *three Witneſſes*, perfectly concurring and agreeing in the *ſame Teſtimony*, or in atteſting to *one and the ſame Thing*. And if you, Sir, think you can draw any other Conſequence from it, I ſhould be glad to ſee the Trial of your Skill.

But what gives you the greateſt Uneaſineſs of all, ſeems to be this, that ſome Perſons, ſuſpected of *Arianiſm*, ſubſcribe the Orthodox Creeds, tho' in an *unorthodox*, *i. e.* a *Scripture* Senſe. I ſhould have thought it an unconteſted Principle, among Proteſtants at leaſt, that no Articles of Faith ought to be ſubſcribed in any other than a Scripture Senſe, and that every Man is equally to judge for himſelf what is that Scripture Senſe: But 'tis your Opinion, that all human Teſts and Creeds ought to be ſubſcribed in the *human Senſe* of the Impoſers,

or not ſubſcribed at all. Upon this Occaſion, you take the Liberty to load your Adverſaries with all the reproachful and criminal Imputations that can be due to the moſt wicked and profligate of Men, for eluding the pious Deſign of thoſe Impoſers, who, notwithſtanding their Infallibility and divine Prerogatives, deſire to *know our Minds.* They ought, Sir, to be capable of knowing Mens Minds, without a Declaration or Confeſſion from the ſuppoſed Criminal himſelf, for otherwiſe nothing can be more ſenſeleſs or ridiculous than the Juriſdiction they pretend to: And if they will vainly extend their Juriſdiction beyond their Cognizance, they muſt be content to bear the *Shame*, and the *Diſappointment*, of it.

But if human Teſts and Creeds muſt be ſubſcribed only in the Senſe of the Impoſers; 'tis certain, that Multitudes of your own Orthodox Friends will be in as bad a Condition as the *Arians.* The *Arminian* and *Arian Subſcribers* ought, doubtleſs, to join in Fellowſhip here, and can have no Reaſon to fall foul upon one another. I only juſt mention this, hoping that when you come to be in a ſomewhat cooler Temper, you muſt needs ſee that all the Thunder-bolts, which on this Occaſion you have diſcharged againſt the *Arians*, to ſink them into the Lake of Fire, muſt fall with equal Weight and Vengeance upon your own Friends and Party.

'Till I can ſee what I have offered fairly refuted, I muſt take it as ſufficiently proved, that no mere human Authority whatever can oblige Men to ſubſcribe *any thing* as *a Rule of Faith*, or as neceſſary to *Salvation* and *Chriſtian Communion*,

Communion, but the *pure Word of God*, or the *Scripture it ſelf*. Men may in many Caſes undoubtedly bind themſelves, and give up their own Liberty where God has not bound or reſtrain'd them; but then they have certainly a Right to judge for themſelves in what Caſe they are to do this, and what not; and no Man ought to part with his Liberty in any Caſe, unleſs he apprehends ſome very good and valuable End may be obtained by it, ſufficient to recompence him for the Right and Property which he gives up. Tho' a Command be ever ſo unjuſt or unreaſonable, yet it may be fit and proper, upon ſome Occaſions, to ſubmit to it: As to deliver my Money, for Inſtance, to a Gentleman who demands it on the Road, if it be neceſſary to ſave my Life. The want of a ſufficient Authority in the Impoſers of human Teſts and Creeds, muſt for ever ſilence them in the Caſe of Non-ſubmiſſion: But if the Thing impoſed be not in it ſelf ſinful, and the Impoſer has it in his Power to make it my Intereſt to ſubmit, I am certainly at Liberty: For while the Thing in it ſelf is conſidered as indifferent, any Benefit and Advantage on the one Side more than the other, will be ſufficient to determine the Choice.

But after all, a great Queſtion farther ariſes, Whether it be lawful, upon any Account, to ſubſcribe human Creeds and Teſts of religious Orthodoxy in any *other Senſe*, than that of the *Impoſers*? Towards the clearing of which, it muſt be here conſidered, that the original Impoſers, in ſuch Caſes, are always ſome Eccleſiaſtical Perſons, who pretend to derive their Authority purely from Chriſt, and who firſt of

all impoſe upon the Civil Magiſtrate, to eſtabliſh their *own Doctrines*, or rather their own *Set of Words*, into a Law; and by that Means impoſe upon others to receive and ſubſcribe them under certain *civil Penalties* and *legal Diſcouragments*. In the Buſineſs of Subſcriptions to human Teſts and Standards of Orthodoxy, the Obligation, where there is any, muſt be *merely Civil*; and I defy all the *Eccleſiaſtical Impoſers* in the World, to make it appear that there is, or can be, any *other Obligation* in the Caſe. Abſtracting from this Force of the *Civil Law*, Eccleſiaſtical Impoſitions will be utterly inſignificant and vain; and it muſt be always every Man's Duty and Intereſt to reject them with Contempt and Scorn. Now, from this Principle, which I ſhall venture to proceed upon 'till it is refuted, it muſt follow, that in the Caſe of Subſcriptions to human legal Teſts of Orthodoxy, Men are not at all concerned with the Senſe of the Eccleſiaſtical Impoſers, or *Creed-makers*, (who, perhaps, had no Senſe at all,) but only with the Senſe and Intention of the Government in the Civil Law. Now, 'tis certain, that the Magiſtrate *as ſuch*, while he acts conſiſtent with *himſelf*, and with the *Nature of his Office*, (as he muſt always be ſuppoſed to do, 'till the contrary appears) can intend nothing in the *Civil Law* but the *publick Good*, or the Preſervation of Civil Intereſt and Property; and therefore, he who ſubſcribes any human Teſt of Orthodoxy, in a Senſe equally conſiſtent with the publick Good, and the Civil Rights and Properties of his Fellow Subjects, equally anſwers the End and Intention of the Government in the Civil Law; and if he does

not

not answer the End of Ecclesiastical Imposers, there can be no Harm in that, provided he does not hurt himself by subscribing any Thing that will not bear a Sense consistent with his Judgment and Conscience.

The Sense of Ecclesiastical Imposers in human Tests of Orthodoxy, is often *impossible*, always *difficult* to come at; but their Intention, with respect to the Event or Consequence, is for the most part obvious enough; being only to engross the Wealth and Preferments of the Church into their *own Hands*, by excluding all who will not list themselves into *their Party*; which being a wicked and *selfish Design*, ought certainly to be eluded by all *lawful Means*.

But you say, that upon this Principle, all the Obligation of Oaths, and all natural Justice in Promises and Contracts between Man and Man, may be eluded both in Words and Actions; which is so wild and groundless a Consequence, that I think you ought in *natural Justice* to review it again, and either to make good the Charge, or withdraw the Impeachment. You have a great deal more to do, Sir, before you can carry this Cause in any Court of Equity or Justice: You must prove, that our *Creed-makers* have an undoubted Authority from Christ, to enforce their *own Sense* of Scripture under the Penalty of *Excommunication*, whether *that Sense* be right or wrong; or at least, that they are not grosly mistaken in the Point of Fundamentals, and do not insist upon any Thing as Fundamental, which the Scripture has not made so: You must prove, that a human Jurisdiction in Matters of mere Belief and Speculation, is a Thing possible or practicable:

you muſt ſhew, that 'tis a Thing in it ſelf ſinful to ſubſcribe a human Teſt in a *real Scripture Senſe*, if that Senſe ſhould happen to differ from the *Senſe of the Impoſers*; and that in all ſuch Caſes I am bound to tell the Impoſers, that I do not believe or ſubſcribe the Article in *their Senſe*: You muſt prove, that Men are obliged in Reaſon and Conſcience to accuſe themſelves before partial uncapable Judges, who take upon them to determine in Matters abſolutely above their Cognizance and Juriſdiction, and who are ready to condemn their innocent Brethren for obeying God rather than Man: And with Reſpect to the Articles now debated, you muſt make it appear, that they are capable of *any Senſe at all*, in which an *Arian* may not as fairly ſubſcribe them as an *Athanaſian*. If you ſhould write no more, till you can prove even this laſt, I ſhould never expect to hear from you upon this Argument again. But the Truth is, you can prove nothing that ſhould make out your ſevere uncharitable Conſequences; and yet you write with as much Aſſurance as if you had Demonſtration for all you ſay, or was dealing only in ſelf-evident Propoſitions. Doctor *Waterland* thinks, that the Articles which were profeſſedly intended as a Teſt againſt *the Arminians*, are capable only of an *Arminian Senſe*; and what if it ſhould be proved, that the Articles which are now urged as a Teſt againſt the *Arians*, are capable only of an *Arian Senſe*, or at leaſt as capable of an *Arian* as of any *other Senſe*? This may be ſo for any Thing the Doctor has proved to the contrary, or I believe for any Thing that he can prove. 'Tis not all the Talk and Suppoſi-

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tion of three perſonal *Hypoſtaſes* or *Subſtances* united in one *undivided Subſtance*; of three intelligent Agents, who are yet but one intelligent Agent; of Two eſſentially diſtinct and infinitely different intelligent Beings, who are but one Perſon, *i. e.* one intelligent Agent: I ſay, 'tis not all this Darkneſs, Uncertainty, and Confuſion of Sounds, that can ever ſerve to clear up either the Scriptures, or the Articles, or that can, in the leaſt, juſtify the *Athanaſians* more than any other Sort of Subſcribers. One might undertake at any Time to make it appear, that *Tritheiſts*, *Arians*, and *Sabellians*, may all, or any of them, ſubſcribe the firſt and ſecond Articles of the Church of *England*, in as clear and conſiſtent a Senſe, as Doctor *Waterland* can in his Syſtem, which he calls *Orthodox* and *Catholick*.

All the learned Orthodox Writers have been ever driven to *this Acknowledgment*, that their *own Doctrine*, even in their *own Words*, is *Incomprehenſible*. They will not allow their *Unity* to be either numerical or ſpecifick; and could never agree among themſelves, whether their *Trinity* be either *real* or *modal*, or *neither*, but ſomething abſolutely unintelligible between *both*. 'Tis true, they all endeavour to throw off this Darkneſs and Confuſion upon the unknown *Manner of the Thing*; and pretend that the *Thing it ſelf* is clear and intelligible enough; but whoever will not ſhut his *own Eyes*, muſt needs ſee, that 'tis the *very Thing it ſelf* which thus confounds them, and that they can fix no determinate Meaning to their *own Words*. Whenever they talk of *Unity* and *Trinity* upon *Athanaſian* Principles, they always take Care to admoniſh

moniſh us, that *theſe Terms* are not to be underſtood in any literal numerical Senſe; but that they are figurative and allegorical, expreſſing ſomething of which we have no proper Compariſon, Analogy, or Reſemblance, in the whole World beſides. Thus then ſtands the Caſe: The *Expreſſions* are figurative, and the Nature of the Figure is ſuch as cannot be expreſs'd; and why then may not the Orthodox *figurative*, be the *ſame* with their Adverſaries *literal Senſe*, notwithſtanding the ſeeming Repugnancy of Sound. This can never be determin'd to the contrary, till the Expreſſions are brought out of the Allegory, or at leaſt 'till the Nature of the Allegory it ſelf be agreed upon; which I fear is never like to be done. The Orthodox Terms in this Caſe may therefore be expounded by, or compared to thoſe Quantities, which the Mathematicians call imaginary or impoſſible; ſuch as is the Root of a Negative Square; and which, tho' they ſtand for nothing in *themſelves*, yet are ſometimes of very good Uſe in the Buſineſs of *Equations*. 'Tis *wonderful*, methinks, when all Kind of *Hereſy* is intelligible enough, that *Orthodoxy* ſhould never be underſtood; but when it cannot be underſtood or literally expreſs'd, 'tis ſtill *more wonderful* that all Men ſhould be obliged to ſubſcribe it in any one particular determinate Senſe. Whenever Doctor *Waterland* ſhall think fit to acquaint us, in what particular determinate Senſe he himſelf ſubſcribes the *two firſt* of the Thirty-nine Articles, I am perſuaded, he will put his Adverſaries out of all manner of Pain concerning either *theſe*, or any of the *reſt*; and till he can explain his own *particular Senſe*,

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he ought, I think, in Honour and common Juſtice, to drop the Buſineſs of Subſcriptions. When it ſhall once appear, as I preſume it ſome time or other muſt, that 'tis impoſſible and impracticable for the moſt honeſt and ſincere Perſons in the World, to ſubſcribe the ſame human *Teſts* of Orthodoxy in the *ſame Senſe*; perhaps, all Parties will then ſee and own, that *theſe Teſts* are no ways preferable to the *Holy Scriptures*, and that the Cauſe of God and Religion may ſubſiſt as well without as with them.

You ſeem in great Pain, *Sir*, leſt your Adverſaries, by their Number, Weight, or Influence, ſhould ſome time or other get the Government on their Side, and procure their Doctrines to be *eſtabliſhed by Law*. 'Tis ſomewhat *odd*, tho' nothing *new*, to obſerve how ſoon a little *Change of Circumſtances* may oblige even Gentlemen of your Steadineſs and Penetration, to *change Sides*. You have been hitherto with others, complaining againſt legal excluſive Eſtabliſhments; and pretending, that Chriſtianity may very well ſubſiſt upon the Foot of the Goſpel, without any *Civil Laws*, or Acts of Parliament, in Matters of *pure Religion* and *Conſcience*: But now you are all on a ſudden of another Mind, and would not loſe your *legal Eſtabliſhment* for the whole World. Is this the Language of a learned Proteſtant? Does the Force of his Argument, the Strength of his Cauſe, lie here? I muſt tell you, Sir, that whatever *yours may*, my *Religion* needs no *legal Eſtabliſhment*; and if under a *legal Toleration* only, it cannot ſubſiſt and ſupport it ſelf upon the ſole Foundation of *Reaſon* and *Scripture*, I ſhall never

never repine to ſee it *fall to the Ground.* I can eaſily give up all thoſe Advantages, of what Nature or Kind ſoever, which can be ſecured only by a legal Church-Encloſure; and am ſorry to ſee you quitting your *Principles*, while you are defending your *Opinions.* 'Tis, for about Half a Sheet together, from *Page* 45,—52. that you ſound the Allarm of the infinite Danger that muſt enſue to your *Orthodox Faith*, ſhould it once loſe its *legal Eſtabliſhment.* I am here intirely of your Opinion, Sir, and verily believe that your Fears and Apprehenſions are well grounded: For if your Scheme of Orthodoxy be ſuch as cannot keep its Footing with all the vaſt Advantages of Civil Law and Church Preferments, what would become of it ſhould it ever chance to loſe theſe neceſſary *Pillars of Truth*, and be left to ſubſiſt only upon the *Merits of the Cauſe*, and the bare Light and Strength of *Reaſon and Revealation?*

But that which muſt needs darken your Fears, and draw the Images of *Juſtice* under the moſt *diſmal Shades* in your Imagination, is, leſt your Adverſaries gaining the Start, ſhould turn the Tables upon you, and promote Truth in your own Way. And what, oh! what muſt be the Conſequence! ſhould Orthodoxy be once ſtript of her Infallibility, and be brought to the Teſts of fallible Hereticks? What then would become of your main Argument, your only ſufficient Teſt and Trial of real Chriſtianity? But methinks I would fain abate your Fears, and adminiſter a little Comfort. I hope better Things of your Adverſaries; and that if they ſhould ever have a proper Occaſion, they would give you for once a good Example of the

Mild-

Mildneſs, Humility, and Charity of the Goſpel: An Example which was never yet given by any Orthodox Church in the World, where they could but engage the coercive Power of the Civil Magiſtrate in Favour of *true Religion*. 'Tis well known, that the firſt *Orthodox Council* were the firſt *Anti-Chriſtian Tyrants* in the *Chriſtian Church*; and that the myſterious infallible *Homoouſians* firſt began the wholeſome Chriſtian Method of enlightening, and converting Men, by *Perſecution* and *penal Laws*. If the *Arians*, in their Turn, gave their Adverſaries a Taſte of this ſalutary Diſcipline, it was but what they might reaſonably expect; and how unjuſtifiable ſoever the Thing might be in it ſelf, the Orthodox could have no juſt Cauſe of Complaint; they, the Orthodox, had opened the Way for it, and taught their Adverſaries the right Method of promoting *true Religion*; and who could blame them for following the bright and brave Example of ſuch glorious Leaders?

The next Half Sheet, *p.* 52,—59. is ſpent in a Charge of Inſincerity againſt *the Authors of the New Scheme*. The main Ground of the Charge is this, That they will not tell you directly their whole Minds concerning the Points now in Debate; which yet, you think, they are indiſpenſably bound to declare when 'tis demanded of them. The Obligation here is doubtleſs as great and indiſpenſable, as that which a Man lies under to anſwer directly and fully to a Robber, who ſhould ask him how much Money he has about him, and demand it all. Suppoſe now, I ſhould tell him in this Caſe but Part of the Truth, and ſo cheat him out

out of Part of my *own Right?* Why then I ſhould injure him juſt as much I do you, by not acquainting you with my whole Mind concerning the Trinity, or any other ſpeculative Point, as often as you might be impertinent and bold enough to demand it of me. Your Inſtance relating to the Conduct of the primitive Chriſtians profeſſing and practiſing their Religion, while expoſed to the Outrage of their Heathen Perſecutors, is nothing at all to the Purpoſe; for it will not follow from hence, that I am obliged to make you my *Confeſſor*, concerning any Point of *mere Judgment* or *Belief*, in which you might think fit to demand Satisfaction. The Heathens brought *no Creeds*, no *Teſt of Orthodoxy* againſt the Chriſtians, as a *Scrutiny* upon *Conſcience* and inward *Judgment*: They condemned them only for an outward Practice, contrary to their Laws. The Chriſtians might have worſhipped their own God in their own Way, provided they would but have comply'd with the Practice of their Country, and offered Sacrifices at the Heathen Altars too. Creeds and Teſts of Orthodoxy, contrived to rack Men's Conſciences for their inward ſpeculative Judgments and Opinions, while they cannot be charged with any wrong Practice, is a more refined Method of Conviction, left to the Diſcovery of Chriſtian Perſecutors, which the ſimple Heathens, who aimed at nothing but what was poſſible and practicable, never thought of. When therefore, laying aſide your *perſecuting Teſts* and *inquiſitory Engines*, founded and employ'd upon a Suppoſition of Infallibility, you ſhall content your ſelf to ſuſpend your judicial Proceſs againſt your Brethren,

thren, 'till upon your *own Principles* you can convict them of ſomething criminal in Practice; you will then, and not 'till then, come up to the Rules and Meaſures of *Pagan Juſtice*.

Under this Head, you pretend to ridicule your Adverſaries, for acknowledging that Chriſt is *God*, and yet denying him to be the one ſupreme *ſelf-exiſtent Being*; whereas your Orthodox Friends muſt aſſert the ſame Thing, if they would talk Senſe, and be conſiſtent with themſelves: and they cannot decline it, but by ſaying, that the ſelf ſame numerical individual *Being* is *begotten* and *unbegotten*, *originate* and *unoriginate*, *ſelf-exiſtent* and *not ſelf-exiſtent*, at the *ſame Time*. But this is not the only Contradiction by a great many, that their cruel hard-hearted Orthodoxy puts them to the needleſs Expence of.

But nothing can be more ſurprizing than the Account you give towards the Cloſe, concerning the Difficulties on both Sides in this Debate. The leaſt, I think, that can be ſaid of it is, that you have been hurried into this Controverſy without *Thought* or *Conſideration*, and before you had read *both Sides*: For ſuppoſing *otherwiſe*, I muſt declare, that I would not bear the *Shame* and *Reproach* of ſuch *groſs Abuſes* and *Miſrepreſentations*, for all the *mere Orthodoxy* in the World. On your Side, it ſeems, there are no Difficulties; 'tis but to take every Thing you ſay for granted, and *to ſuppoſe* that what you contend for, is a Matter of *divine Revelation*, and the Buſineſs is done. But this you know is the very Thing in Queſtion; which, therefore, you ought not to have begg'd. And 'tis certainly wholly unaccountable and inexcuſable,

cuſable, that you ſay nothing to that very Point, upon which any *fair Diſputant* would have thought himſelf concerned to have ſpent his *main Strength*. As for the Difficulties you ſeem to enumerate on the *Arian Side*, I dare now truſt them in the Hands of any *common Reader*, ſince every one muſt ſee that they are *mere Dreams* and *Fictions* of your own *Imagination*; tho', perhaps, you may by an arbitrary Impoſition of *Names*, call them *Conſequences*.

Your ranking the Doctrine of your Adverſaries among thoſe heretical, impious, and damnable Methods, which draw down divine Vengeance, and the Judgments of God, upon a Nation, is ſuitable enough to that *Party Spirit*, *Zelotiſm*, *lurking Conceit* of *Infallibility*, of which you have given but too plain Diſcoveries throughout this whole Book.

In fine, after you had ſpent the whole Strength and Force of your Elocution and Rhetorick, to animate and inſpirit the learned Men among the Orthodox, to appear and make a Stand againſt a growing formidable Hereſy; which, by ſpreading ſtill farther and farther like a mortal Contagion, threatens to lay all waſte before it; you conclude with this *remarkable Paragraph*, *p.* 84. " How deſirable is it in ſuch Circum-
" ſtances, that thoſe Numbers of our Ortho-
" dox Clergy, who are Men of diſtinguiſhed
" Learning, able in Diſputation, and not in-
" cumbered with buſy Life; and whoſe Duty
" it is to ſtand in the Gap, and oppoſe the
" Encroachments of a pernicious Hereſy;
" would beſtir themſelves, and follow the Ex-
" ample of ſeveral excellent Writers? The
" learned Doctor *Waterland*, the judicious Earl

" of

" of *Nottingham*, the acute Dr. *Knight*; who " have ſignaliz'd themſelves in this Contro- " verſy, bravely defended the orthodox Faith, " and led in Triumph the Champions of the " *Arian Philiſtines*, that defy'd the Armies of " Chriſt the living God; beſides many others, " as well Diſſenters as Churchmen, who have " engaged in this honourable Cauſe, fought a " good Fight, and covered with Shame the " boaſtful Adverſary." Never, I think, did any Hero before, thus mix his *Triumphs* with his *Fears*; and ſing *Te Deum* for *Victory*, while he is trembling under the Apprehenſions of *a Defeat*. You ſummon up all the Powers of Heaven and Earth, to fall upon a poor routed vanquiſhed Enemy, whoſe Chiefs are all, either ſlain upon the Field of Battle, or taken Captives, and made Priſoners of War. You cry aloud for Help, and ſpare not; but when the drowſy Legions begin to awake and are ready to receive your Commands, you calmly tell them there is no Danger, they may ſleep on and take their Reſt, for the Work is all done already to their Hands: Dr. *Waterland*, the Earl of *Nottingham*, and a few others, have got the Honour of the Day, and their Adverſaries are all dead in *Argument*, and buried with *Shame*. But if it be indeed ſo, to what Purpoſe is all this Noiſe and Outcry? Whence proceeds this Panick in the midſt of all your Trophies? One would think you expected the *Reſurrection* of the *Wicked* before *that* of the *Juſt*; or at leaſt apprehended that theſe dead Men are ſtill alive, arm'd in their full Strength, and capable of giving you as warm a Reception as ever. And indeed, after ſuch a *Rout* as *this*, no Body won-

ders to find the *vanquish'd Enemy* safe and unhurt, without having received the slightest *Wound*, or lost one *Drop of Blood*. But when you come calmly to review this whole Matter, I hope you will think of some more proper Method of ending the War; and either renew the Debate in a Way of *fair Argument*, or sit down content with the *present Victory*.

If I have omitted any Thing material in your Argument, I should be glad to hear from you again as Occasion serves; for tho' I have very little Spare-Time to bestow upon this Controversy, yet I think that little cannot be better employ'd than by doing Justice to a Gentleman of your distinguish'd Character and Merit in the learned World. I shall be always ready either to submit upon Conviction, or give you my farther Reasons why I cannot be convinced; and as to the Event, it does not at all concern me, whether I am to be better enlightened to receive *your Principles*, or more strengthened and confirmed in my *own*. I am, *Sir*, with Respect to all the Obligations of Justice, Peace, and Charity,

Marlborough, March 14. 1721-2.

Your most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

T. M.

A

REFUTATION

OF THE

FALSE PRINCIPLES

Assumed and apply'd by the Reverend

Mr. Joseph Pyke,

In his Book, entituled,

An Impartial View of the Principal Difficulties that affect the TRINITARIAN, *or clog the* ARIAN *Scheme*, &c.

To which is added,

Some short REMARKS on Sir *Richard Blackmore's Just Prejudices against the* Arian *Hypothesis.*

WITH A

POSTSCIPT

Concerning the real Agreement between the *Athanasians* and *Socinians* in the *Trinitarian* Controversy.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

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Mr. *JOSEPH PYKE*, &c.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

Reverend and Dear Sir,



YOU desire to know my Opinion of Mr. *Pyke*'s Performance; as to which I have endeavoured to give you some Satisfaction in the following Remarks. I have not accompanied him thro' all his declamatory Harangues; for I have neither Time nor Patience to attend a preaching Disputant, while he is only appealing from Mens Understanding to their Passions. I have therefore contented

my ſelf with only ſhewing the Weakneſs, Abſurdity and Self-contradiction of his main Principles; and the Foundation being removed, I leave the Superſtructure to take its own Fate. Our Author having made a Bow or Two to Charity and Moderation, and paid a few Compliments to the Mildneſs, the Tenderneſs, the Meekneſs and Humility of the Goſpel, preſently throws off the Diſguiſe, and appears in his own Perſon, ſparing no Argument in his Rage, of what Force or Energy ſoever, nor regarding the ſtrongeſt Contradiction that ſtands before him. This Gentleman finding it for his Purpoſe, and having reſolved with himſelf to write in the Defence of what, as he owns, he does not underſtand; it muſt be allow'd that he has hit upon the only proper Method of doing it: I mean, by ſtrong Aſſertions, moving Harangues, Diſtinctions without Difference, and a thick Cloud of unintelligible Terms. For I ſhall ſhew in its proper Place, that he makes uſe of the Principal Words upon which this Controverſy turns, ſuch as *Subſtance*, *Eſſence*, *Perſon*, *Nature*, and the like, either without any Senſe or Meaning at all, or elſe with a Senſe alter'd and vary'd according to the Exigence of the Caſe, and the Diſtreſs he is under. Perhaps this Writer will think that I, above all Men, ought to have ſpar'd him, becauſe the only Conceſſion he makes in his whole Book is to me. He grants, becauſe he could not well help it, (tho' yet what might he not have help'd?) that the Four Miniſters had not that ſtrict and proper or demonſtrative Certainty, which I argu'd againſt; and he allows that Matters of Faith are uncapable of it: But then he thinks it was very

very hard and unreaſonable in me to underſtand them ſo, and endeavour to fix a Senſe upon them, which I could not well ſuppoſe to be their real Meaning. That they had no ſtrict demonſtrative Certainty of what they contended for; that Matters of Faith are in their own Nature uncapable of it; and that they, the Four Miniſters, could not ſtand to it when charged, I knew very well: But ſtill their pretending to and claiming it in Words, and inſinuating ſuch a Senſe into the Minds of other People, is as viſible as the Book it ſelf; and their ſecret Meaning ought not to skreen them againſt the Charge of a contrary Senſe, plainly expreſs'd and convey'd wherever it could meet with any Diſpoſition to receive it: and this Senſe had been ſo plainly expreſs'd, and ſo often inculcated in the Book, that I may venture to ſay, there was not One in a Thouſand of their own Friends but what underſtood them ſo. In Conſequence of which, I was for a long Time after impeach'd and condemn'd by the whole Party, for denying the moſt ſtrict and abſolute Certainty in Matters of Faith; and this was repreſented as a bold Attack upon Religion, and no leſs than Scepticiſm, Infidelity, and a Subverſion of Chriſtianity; not only the common People, but the Miniſters themſelves, with great Zeal and Earneſtneſs joyning in the Cry. It was very juſt and proper in me, therefore, to ſhew the Abſurdities and intolerable Conſequences of ſuch a Pretence; and I am perſwaded, that theſe Gentlemen are not half ſo angry with their own Friends for miſunderſtanding their real Senſe, as they are with me for undeceiving them: ſince it is

now generally believed, that notwithstanding their indubitable Perswasion, and invincible Confidence, they are as liable to Mistakes, even in this very Matter, as other People. Mr. *Pyke* may call his Perswasion rational Perswasion, with all my Heart; he may pity and pray for others, and bless himself in the glorious Conceit of his Orthodoxy, as he pleases: However, I doubt not but to make it appear, that his rational Perswasion is not only above, but contrary to, Reason.

The Author in his Introduction, *p.* 6. lays down (as I understand him) *An uncontested Principle.* He tells us, *that it is rational to suppose, that God may reveal some Things, the Nature, Reasons, Circumstances, and Modes of which can't be brought down to the Level of our weak Understandings.* I suppose he means, that a Thing in it self may be reveal'd, as to its Truth and Existence, tho' the Manner, Reasons, and other Circumstances of the Thing, are not reveal'd, and so still remain as to us incomprehensible. This doubtless, is all that he can mean by it; for should he say, that the Modes, Reasons, *&c.* are reveal'd or made known to us, and yet that they remain still incomprehensible or unknown, notwithstanding the Revelation, it would be a Contradiction in Terms. A Thing in it self, as to its Truth and Existence in general, may be certainly revealed, and made clear and intelligible enough, where the unreveal'd Manner and other Circumstances of the Thing may remain still unknown and incomprehensible; in which Case, we ought to receive and believe the Thing so far as it is revealed, and content ourselves with being ignorant in other Matters,

ters, where God has not thought fit to inform us. And who ever doubted of this, or once deny'd it? And therefore, the Author's going about to prove it, and urging it upon his Friend, as a Matter of great Conſequence, and as if it was what his Adverſaries would not grant, is a little extraordinary, and a ſignal Inſtance of his Chriſtian Tenderneſs, Moderation and Charity. If this Author cannot find a Man, who owning a Thing to be reveal'd from God, will yet with-hold his Aſſent, becauſe he cannot underſtand the Reaſon or Manner of the Thing, let him bear the Imputation which he now lays upon his Adverſaries, without the leaſt Appearance, I will not ſay of *Chriſtian Charity*, but even of *Pagan Juſtice*. Let him prove the Thing, that there are Three diſtinct Intelligent Agents in the One God, and we ſhall receive it; but he knows very well that 'tis the *Thing it ſelf*, and not the Manner of the Thing, that he and his Maſters affirm, and we deny, to be a Matter of divine Revelation; and tho' he pretends to throw off all his Ignorance and Inconſiſtency upon the unreveal'd and unknown Cauſes, Reaſons and Modes of Things, yet I doubt not but to make it evident, that his Ignorance lies in his having no Notion of the very Thing that he writes about, and uſing his own Words without Ideas.

As preparatory to what follows, it may be proper here to obſerve to you, that there is one general Contradiction which is incluſive of all particular Contradictions, and to which they are all reducible, *viz.* that the ſame Thing, at the ſame Time, may be, and not be; or that the ſame Propoſition may be true and

falſe,

false, at the same Time. This being the primary fundamental Contradiction of all, whoever can get off with it, will never boggle at any other; but you may to as good Purpose fling Dust in the Air, as stare him in the Face with Contradictions. Now this Sum and Substance of all Absurdity and Impossibility, our Author, and others of his Cast, by the help of a mere verbal Distinction, always assume as their first Principle; which they employ as the great Engine, whereby to remove all other Difficulties, and deliver themselves from the uneasy Weight, whenever they happen to be taken, as they frequently are, in affirming and denying the same Thing. Their Principle is this, that the same Thing may be, or not be; or the same Proposition, at the same Time, may be true and false; not indeed in the same, but in *different Respects*. Now if you grant them this Principle, it will be impossible ever to fasten a Contradiction upon them; because it will follow from the Principle it self, that there can be no such thing in Nature as a Contradiction, but every Thing is equally true and false. I shall shew therefore, that this Distinction of the same and different Respects, as thus apply'd, is merely verbal; and that it is impossible, that the same Thing, at the same Time, should be true and false in any Sense at all, either in the same, or in different Respects. 'Tis evident, that whatever is affirmed, or deny'd, in any one particular determinate Sense, must necessarily, in that determinate Sense, be either true or false; and cannot be both, or neither, because in a particular determinate Sense there can be no Variety; and there is no Medium or State of Indifferency betwixt

twixt Truth and Falſehood. 'Tis evident alſo, that the Thing affirmed or deny'd, cannot be the *ſame Thing* any longer than the Terms of the Propoſition retain the ſame preciſe determinate Meaning; for where the Complex Ideas to which the Terms of the Propoſition are affixed, ſhall be any way altered or varied, either by putting in ſome new Ideas, or leaving out any of the old, tho' the ſame Sound may be retain'd, yet the Thing it ſelf, which is hereby affirmed or deny'd, will not be the ſame, but quite different Things. What is therefore frequently, to ſerve a Turn, called the ſame Thing in *different Reſpects*, is really two different Things; one of which may be eaſily true, and the other falſe, at the ſame Time. And this is the Myſtery of different Senſes and Reſpects, being a Device of ſubtle Diſputants, when they have a Mind to ſhuffle upon you very different and perhaps contradictory Things, under the ſame Sound, as one and the ſame Thing.

And now, Sir, I ſhall exemplify this unfair Management throughout this whole Book of our Author. And here that I may do him all poſſible Juſtice, and leave him no Reaſon to complain, I ſhall firſt of all conſider this Mono-triple Scheme upon its own general Principles, as common to all the *Athanaſians*, without any Regard to the ſeveral different and inconſiſtent Explications given of it by their Doctors and learned Men; and ſhew that it implies an Impoſſibility and Contradiction in the abſtract Nature and Reaſon of Things; and then I will apply it to the Author's own Account of the Matter, and ſhew that 'tis as much a

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Contradiction in his Scheme, as in any other; that he has not, as he imagines, hit upon a Medium between *Sabellianism* and *Tritheism*; and that, if he will ſtand to his own Principles, he muſt build his Hope of Salvation upon a neceſſary eternal Contradiction, and profeſs himſelf a *Mono-Tritheiſt*.

To ſay, that there are Three Things really diſtinct and different, ſo that the One is not the Other; that each of theſe Three diſtinct and different Things are infinite, and yet that there are not Three different Things which are infinite, or Three Infinites, but only One Infinite, or One Thing only that is infinite, is an expreſs Contradiction in the Nature of Things. Thus alſo, to affirm, that there are Three really diſtinct and different Subjects, which are each of them indued with infinite Power, Wiſdom and Intelligence; and yet, that there are not three infinite Powers, Wiſdoms or Intelligences, or Three infinitely powerful, wiſe and intelligent Subjects, but only One ſuch, is evidently contradictory, and impoſſible in the Nature and Reaſon of Things. For the Diſtinctneſs and Infinity of the ſame ſpecifick Attributes, muſt neceſſarily be multiplied with their diſtinct infinite Subjects; and the Negation of this muſt be eternally a Contradiction, while the ſame preciſe Meaning is affixed to the ſame Terms: And ſilently to alter the Senſe of the Terms by clapping a different Meaning to the ſame Sound, under a Pretence of the ſame *Thing* in different *Reſpects*, when it is really two *different Things*; this, I ſay, is not to clear a Contradiction, but to uſe a bad Piece of Artifice, and impoſe upon the Reaſon and Senſes of Mankind. Now

to carry this a little farther: It is, I think, univerſally allow'd by all the *Athanaſians*, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are Three really diſtinct and different Subjects; and ſo far diſtinct, that they are each of them indu'd with really diſtinct and incommunicable Attributes or Properties. They likewiſe affirm, that each of theſe Three diſtinct and different Subjects, is God in the ſtricteſt Senſe, or God abſolutely ſupreme over all; and yet they maintain, that there is but One only Subject that is God alone, *i. e.* they ſay, that there are Three who are each of them diſtinctly God, and yet there is but One who is God alone.

Now, tho' the Contradiction here be ſufficiently evident in it ſelf; yet it will be proper to conſider the general Evaſion, by which they endeavour to get off with it; which is this: They ſay, that the Three diſtinct Subjects of the perſonal Properties are united in one common Subject of the eſſential Properties, and ſo are one and the ſame in Subſtance or Eſſence. But here they labour to get rid of one Contradiction, by running at leaſt into Half a Dozen more; for either this one common Subject of the eſſential Attributes, is preciſely and determinately the very *ſelf-ſame* with the Three diſtinct Subjects of the perſonal Attributes, or it is not. If they affirm that it is, this will be ſaying, that one Subject is Three diſtinct Subjects, and Three diſtinct Subjects but one Subject, without Diſtinction or Diverſity; and this at the ſame Time, and in the ſame Senſe: which, I preſume, no one can be in any doubt of, whether it be a Contradiction or no. But if it be ſaid, that the common Subject of the

eſſential

essential Properties, is not the self-same, but a distinct Subject from the Three other distinct Subjects of the personal Properties; then since also the essential Attributes are supposed to be communicated to the Three distinct Subjects of the personal Attributes, this must necessarily make Four distinct Subjects, each of which is indu'd with all the essential Attributes; that is, Four distinct infinitely perfect Substances. 'Tis true, these infinite Substances will be undividedly and inseparably united to each other mutually, since it is impossible that Three infinitely extended Substances should be divided or separated with respect to Space or Dimension; which, by the way, Sir, you may observe, is all that any of Dr. *Waterland*'s Expressions about it will amount to; but then this does not destroy the real Existence, and numerical Distinctions, of the Substances themselves. If to avoid this Multiplicity of Subjects or Substances, it should be said, that the Subjects or Substances which sustain the personal Attributes, are not numerically distinct, but one and the same with the common Essence; as this destroys all manner of Distinction betwixt essential and personal Attributes, and supposes a Person to be only a distinct Mode of Subsistence in the one common Subject or Substance; which is *Sabellianism*: so by confounding the distinct Subjects, and supposing them to be numerically one and the same, it contains an express Contradiction, and overthrows this Hypothesis upon another Principle, as I have shew'd already. And therefore turn this Scheme which Way you will, it must still appear contradictory, and necessarily subvert and destroy it self. I know

there

there is one Evasion still behind, as the last Resort of those, who in this Scheme are press'd with Contradictions; that is, when they cannot get themselves off by any possible Sense that can be put to their own Words, they fly to the Incomprehensibility of the Subject, which, as they seem to think, gives them a Right to use Words without a Meaning. And thus, at length, they stand acquitted in empty Sounds and impenetrable Darkness; for who can charge a Proposition with a Contradiction, which is own'd to be unintelligible, and without any Sense or Meaning at all?

And now, Sir, having consider'd the Impossibility and Self-contradictoriness of this Hypothesis upon its general Principles; let us turn again more directly to our Author, and see how he has mended the Matter, in his own particular Account of it. The great Difficulty in his way, was to find a Medium betwixt *Sabellianism* and *Tritheism*, and to fix a certain determinate Meaning to the word Person, which might be steadily kept to, so as to answer this Purpose. And this the Author thinks he has done in the following Definition, *p.* 13. Here then, a Person is, according to him, "A spiritual infinite intelligent Agent; which must "not be consider'd as abstracted from, but as "truly subsisting in, the Divine Nature, and as "mutually eternally and inseparably related "to the other Co-essential Persons in the Godhead; from whom he is sufficiently and only "distinguished, by some personal, and as such "incommunicable Properties.

This is his Definition; which if you can understand, the rest will be all clear; and therefore,

fore, I shall the more distinctly consider and examine it, because it will save me the Trouble of pursuing him much farther; and let the World see, that he has been at the Pains of writing a large Book, upon a Subject of great Importance, without saying one Word to the Purpose: It will likewise serve as a signal Instance of the magical Power of Sounds, and let you into the whole Mystery of scholastick Juggling. That a Person is an intelligent Agent, or an intelligent active Substance, is plain and intelligible enough; and thus much the Author allows: From whence one should be naturally led to conlude, that Three Persons are Three intelligent Agents, or active Substances. But this will not do with our Author, and the Difficulty is how to avoid it; which, I believe, every one must allow to be a little pinching. He will grant perhaps, that an Agent or Person, is an intelligent active Substance, because 'tis impossible to define a Person or Agent, without including the Idea of Substance in it; but then, he will say, that tho' one Agent is an active Substance, yet it will not follow, that Three Agents are Three active Substances. Which plainly amounts to this, that tho' it is granted, that one Agent is one Agent, yet it will not follow from hence, that three Agents are three Agents. Perhaps indeed one will not follow from the other, because they are both self-evident, that is as evident as the Self-contradiction of our Author's Definition and Hypothesis. 'Tis plain, that the Substance it self is the Agent or Person; and therefore 'tis simply and absolutely impossible to multiply the Persons or Agents, without multiplying the Sub-

Subſtances. And from hence it is evident, that the Diſtinction between eſſential and perſonal Properties, is abſurd and ridiculous: for ſince the Perſon or Agent is nothing elſe but the active intelligent Subſtance it ſelf; and ſince there is no other Subject of Properties but this one Subſtance; and conſequently the Intelligence, active Power, and all other poſſible or conceivable Properties, muſt ſubſiſt in this one Subſtance, as their proper Subject, or elſe ſubſiſt without any Subject at all; 'tis plain, that every eſſential Property muſt be a perſonal Property, and every perſonal Property an eſſential Property, without any Difference or Diſtinction. But ſince our Author talks in his Definition, and throughout his whole Book, of perſonal incommunicable Properties, as the Characteriſticks of the Three diſtinct Perſons; I would ask him what is the immediate Subject of thoſe incommunicable Properties? If he ſays, the diſtinct Perſons themſelves; he then allows the Perſons to be the proper ſuſtaining Subjects of their own Attributes, that is, diſtinct Subſtances; which is *Tritheiſm*. But if this does not pleaſe him, he muſt place theſe perſonal Properties in the one common Subſtance or Eſſence, as their only proper Subject, which muſt make them eſſential Attributes, and deſtroy the real diſtinction of Perſons; and this is plainly *Sabellianiſm*, which is the ſame with *Socinianiſm*. It will be impoſſible in this way to ſuppoſe any Diverſity or Multiplicity of Perſons, without ſuppoſing at the ſame Time, and in the very ſame Senſe, a like Multiplicity and Diverſity of Eſſence. And I challenge this Author, or any of his abler and more learned Friends, to aſſign any poſſible Meaning to their

own Words, or tell us what they intend by Three *real ſubſtantial Perſons*, upon the Hypotheſis of one individual Eſſence, or numerical Identity of Subſtance. Perhaps, the Author will be here ready to wonder at my Dullneſs, or Preſumption, and ask whether he has not done this already? I ſay no, he has not done it; and I ſhall venture to tell him farther, that he cannot poſſibly do it. In this very Definition, he underſtands Perſon in Two different and contrary Senſes, even while he pretends to be fixing and aſcertaining the determinate Meaning of the Word. And this I ſhall now ſhew, which will let you into the whole Myſtery. I do not mean into the *deep Things* of *God*, but into the *deep Things* of Mr. *Pyke*. Let us ſee then what he can poſſibly intend by Three Perſons in the *Divine Nature*, in the *Godhead*, in one and the ſame *Subſtance* or *Eſſence*; for theſe he uſes all along as equivalent Expreſſions.

When therefore he aſſerts Three Perſons in One and the ſame Subſtance or Eſſence; if he ſhould here keep to his own defined Senſe of the Word Perſon, *viz.* an intelligent Agent, or intelligent active Subſtance, by puttting the Definition for the Thing defin'd, what he ſays muſt amount to this, That there are Three intelligent active Subſtances, in One intelligent active Subſtance; that is, Three Perſons and but One Perſon, Three equally infinite and ſupreme Gods, and yet but One ſuch: which is ſo far from a Medium between *Sabellianiſm* and *Tritheiſm*, that 'tis jumbling them both together, and maintaining both Parts of the Contradiction.

Here then his defin'd Senſe of a Perſon which he declares for, will not do, and therefore he claps

claps in his ſecret and reſerved Meaning, while he diſclaims it. By Perſon here therefore, when he ſays there are Three Perſons in One and the ſame Eſſence, he can mean only Three Modes of Subſiſtence in the ſame Subſtance or Eſſence. And becauſe there is no other Subject of theſe Attributes or Modes, but the One Eſſence in which they ſubſiſt, they muſt neceſſarily be eſſential Attributes; and ſo there will be but One real ſubſtantial Perſon under Three Modes or Attributes; which is direct and plain *Sabellianiſm* or *Socinianiſm*: And this Opinion is indeed no Contradiction in it ſelf, tho' it be a Contradiction to every Thing elſe in Chriſtianity. Thus, Sir, you ſee how our Author plays at faſt and looſe; how he ſhuffles in, or ſlips out, the Idea of Subſtance, or Agent, in his Account of *Perſon*, juſt as he thinks fit; nay, ſuppoſes Two contrary Senſes to be both true at once, and ſo makes his Definition abſolutely unintelligible and ſelf-contradictory. And to ſhew that the Author is ever the ſame inconſiſtent Perſon with himſelf, I muſt deſire you to obſerve the Method he takes to diſengage himſelf, *p.* 213, where he is preſs'd, among others, with this Contradiction, that if one and the ſelf-ſame Subſtance or Eſſence be common to all the Three Perſons, it muſt follow, that the ſame numerical Eſſence is begotten and unbegotten. Now, what does he reply to this? Does he pretend that there is not a ſtrict and abſolutely Identity, or numerical Sameneſs of Eſſence, in the Three Perſons? Nothing like it; but he ſays, that it was not the *Eſſence*, but the *Perſon* of the Father, who begat the *Perſon* of the *Son*; and that the Subſtance or

Eſſence is equally unoriginate and unbegotten in each Perſon alike. And this he was forced to ſay, becauſe it is ſelf-evident, that the ſelf-ſame individual Eſſence cannot poſſibly be begotten and unbegotten, derived and underived, communicated and not communicated, at the ſame Time. When therefore he tell us, that the *Perſon* of the Father begat the *Perſon* of the *Son*; he muſt either underſtand the Word *Perſon* according to the *Sabellian* Senſe in both Places, and ſay, that the Father in begetting the Son, did not act eſſentially, and that he did not beget a real ſubſtantial Son, but that only One Mode or Attribute begat another; or elſe he muſt include the Idea of Agent, or active Subſtance, in the complex Idea expreſs'd by the Word *Perſon*, when apply'd to the Father as begetting, and leave it out when apply'd to the Son as begotten. He is at Liberty to chuſe either of theſe, as he likes beſt, ſince 'tis evident, that he muſt take one of them; but which way ſoever he turns himſelf, he can only by wriggling out of one Contradiction, ſlip into another; and yet, which is very diverting, while he is only trifling with Words, he talks of fighting, defeating and conquering, and ſeems overjoy'd in the Conceit of a Victory.

Dr. *Waterland*, whom our Author always admires and never underſtands, was ſo well aware, that *Subſtance* and *Perſon*, as uſed in this Argument, muſt be liable to the very ſame Sort of Unity and Diverſity, that he expreſly owns, that in a certain Senſe, or rather *different Senſes*, the Three Perſons are but One Perſon, and One Perſon Three Perſons. And in the ſame Senſe, and by the ſame Neceſſity, had he dar'd

ſpeak

ſpeak out, he muſt have likewiſe own'd, that the One Subſtance is Three Subſtances, and the One God Three Gods. But tho' this double Intention may ſave the Doctor from *real Contradictions*, as to his ſecret reſerv'd Meaning, where he ſeems to run into them in Words, yet it can by no means ſave his Juſtice and Integrity in the Management of this Controverſy. 'Tis upon this Score the Doctor allows, that One may be Three, and Three One, when apply'd to Perſon, or Agent, but not ſo when apply'd to Subſtance, or God; that he can allow of Three Perſons united into One Perſon, but not of Three Subſtances alike united into One Subſtance, or Three Gods into One God: And 'tis from hence he can grant, that there are Three different, but not ſeparate Perſons, each of whom is God; and yet denies that there are Three different, but not ſeparate Gods. This ſeems a little hard and unequal; but there is a Myſtery in it, which the Doctor could explain very well, had he a Mind to it. It would be the eaſieſt Matter in the World to defend all that Dr. *Clark* has advanced concerning the Trinity, upon Dr. *Waterland*'s own Principles; but thoſe who like a Man only becauſe he ſeems to be Orthodox, never trouble their Heads about the Meaning, provided his Words ſound well; and 'tis for want of being let into the Secret that our Author has converted his Maſter's *ſeeming Contradictions* into real *Ones*.

What has been ſaid, may, I think, be ſufficient to ſhew, that our Author's Happineſs is only imaginary, and that he has had the ill luck to miſcarry in his Attempt to fix a Medium between *Sabellianiſm* and *Tritheiſm*; un-

der which Miſhap, however, he has this to comfort him, that he has done as much towards it, as other greater Men, *i. e.* juſt nothing at all.

The next grand Principle upon which he builds his Fabrick, is this, that the Man Chriſt born of the Virgin, or *Jeſus of Nazareth*, was not a *human Perſon*. By which, if he means any Thing at all, I think it muſt be this, that the *Man Chriſt*, or *Jeſus of Nazareth*, was Man in general, but no Man in particular; that he had no real actual human Exiſtence as diſtinct from the *Supreme God*; that he was only human Nature, or the general abſtract Idea of Humanity, but no particular real Man, or human Perſon actually ſubſiſting.

But becauſe I cannot poſſibly find out any Meaning for him, but what muſt at once be Contradiction and Blaſphemy; if he has himſelf any Meaning to the Word *Perſon*, as he applies it to the Incarnation and the *One Perſon* of our Saviour, I muſt here call upon him to produce it. And I cannot but think him under a plain indiſpenſible Obligation to it, as he would from henceforth be reputed a Man of any Conſcience, Integrity or Honour: For I muſt tell him, that to lay the whole Weight of Chriſtianity upon a Thing of which he has not the leaſt Notion of Conception, to uſe Words of his own without any Meaning, under a Pretence of the Myſteriouſneſs of Scripture, and to exclude from the Chriſtian Covenant, and the Communion of Saints, all who will not join with him in the ſame unintelligible Sounds, is the moſt inſufferable Piece of Arrogance and Antichriſtian Zelotiſm. I could

eaſily

eaſily have forgiven our Author all the Abſurdity and Contradiction in Nature, without calling him to any Account for it, if he had not tack'd Chriſtianity, and the Salvation of Mens Souls, to it. But ſince he claims the Privileges of the Goſpel, with an Exemption to all but himſelf and his own Party; and has employ'd all his Artifice in working up and inflaming the Paſſions of the People, where he could not inform their Judgments; ſince he looks upon Moderation in this Point as a Crime, and has done his utmoſt yet farther to rend, diſtract, and divide the miſerable Churches: I hope he will think himſelf concern'd to ſupport what he has laid ſo vaſt a Weight on; and that he will not, after the Example of ſome others, firſt diſcover his Preſumption and Prejudice in writing about what he does not underſtand, and then his Cowardice and Treachery to the Souls of Men, in not defending what he takes to be of the utmoſt Conſequence.

And now, *Sir*, I have juſt done with our Author; only, to make ſome Amends for my not attending him farther, and that he may not think himſelf ſlighted, I here faithfully promiſe him, in the Face of the World, that if he can fairly refute what has been offer'd, and defend his main Principles, which I think I have overthrown; I will frankly make him a Preſent of all the reſt, and yield him the whole Cauſe. If he can do this, I have here con-confin'd him to a narrow Compaſs, and thereby ſav'd him the Trouble of writing a large Book, in a long-labour'd preaching Harangue: But if he cannot ſupport his Foundation, the Building muſt fall of courſe. I doubt not, however,

but the other Gentlemen, with whom he is more particularly engag'd, will take care to reſcue themſelves from his *feeble Gloſſes*, in which he continually applies the foregoing falſe Principles, and never fails of begging the moſt material Parts of the Queſtion. But ſince our Author pretends all along to be very clear, and that he does not uſe Words without a Meaning, let him in his next ſettle any one certain determinate Senſe to the Words, Communication, Generation, Proceſſion, Divine Nature, Divine Eſſence, Godhead, Undivided Subſtance, as he applies theſe Sounds to the Subject of the Trinity; as alſo to the Words, Nature, Perſon, Incarnation, Union, Humiliation, Infinite Satisfaction, and the like, when he applies them to the mediatorial Capacity, Offices and Tranſactions of the Son of God: For what I charge upon him, is this, that tho' thoſe Terms have a fix'd determinate Senſe in their common Application and Uſe, and he may not be ignorant of this their common Senſe, yet when he comes to apply them to his *own Hypotheſis*, he ſtrips them of their *common* eſtabliſh'd *Meaning*, without ſubſtituting any *other* in its ſtead, and uſes them as mere empty Sounds, without any Senſe or Meaning at all. If he does not, upon this Admonition and Charge, ſettle the determinate Meaning of thoſe Words, as they muſt ſtand in his Hypotheſis; I believe all the World muſt conclude, that his Inſignificancy and beloved Darkneſs is neceſſary to ſomething elſe beſides the clearing of Truth, and informing the Judgment.

I had drawn up an *Examination of Sir* Richard Blackmore's *Juſt Prejudices againſt the* Arian *Hypotheſis*,

potheſis, with a Deſign of publiſhing it about four Months ago; but this farther Occaſion of Writing happening in the mean while, I thought it altogether needleſs to trouble the Publick with a particular Anſwer to a Book, which, as to its main Argument, might fairly be overthrown in the Compaſs of two or three Pages.

I muſt here therefore obſerve to you, that this honourable and worthy Gentleman has thought fit to lay the whole Streſs of his Cauſe upon this Principle, *viz.* That the governing Perfections of God, and his Truth and Fidelity in the Promiſes of the Goſpel, cannot poſſibly be vindicated, upon the Suppoſition that the *Athanaſian* Hypotheſis, or modern Scheme of Orthodoxy, is not true and agreeable to Scripture. A *bold Aſſumption* certainly this, and, I fear, a very raſh and immature *one*. 'Tis wonderful, that a Gentleman of ſo great Learning and Abilities, as every one muſt own Sir *Richard Blackmore* to be, ſhould irrecoverably plunge himſelf at once beyond a Poſſibility of defending the Perfections of God, or the Truth of the Chriſtian Revelation, if he ſhould happen to be miſtaken about a particular ſcholaſtick Hypotheſis, which he owns to be incomprehenſible. His general Argument is this; That if the Chriſtian Church has been miſtaken for at leaſt theſe 1400 Years, about a Point of ſuch Importance; it muſt hence follow, that the Promiſes of the Goſpel relating to the Stability and perpetual Eſtabliſhment of the Church of Chriſt upon Earth to the End of Time, have not been in Fact fulfill'd; on which Suppoſition it will, as the learned Author concludes,

concludes, be impoſſible to vindicate the Divine Perfections, and the Truth of Chriſtianity. But I muſt deſire you to take Notice, that this learned Gentleman, in the Management of his Argument, aſſumes ſeveral Things as *Poſtulata*, without Proofs, which no Adverſary will grant him.

1*ſt*. He ſuppoſes, that the Point now in Debate, is a Fundamental, or eſſential to Chriſtianity; and that one Side or other in the preſent Controverſy, muſt be guilty of Hereſy or damnable Error. This he aſſumes as granted, and contents himſelf with barely aſſerting it in ſtrong and poſitive Terms, without taking the leaſt Notice of many Things which had been offer'd with great Appearance of Reaſon to the contrary. And therefore, 'till the learned Author ſhall be pleas'd to produce his Evidence, I ſhall here make very ſhort with him, and content myſelf with as flatly denying it.

2*dly*. This very learned, and in other Reſpects juſtly celebrated Author, aſſumes it as a Thing granted, that the Chriſtian Church, *i. e.* the Groſs of thoſe who outwardly and viſibly profeſs Chriſtianity, have, for at leaſt theſe 1400 Years, been agreed in this Point, in Senſe as well as Sound; and that the Doctrine they have unanimouſly receiv'd, has been no other than what is now contended for. But I am very well perſwaded, that the Proof of this would give the learned Author a great deal of Trouble; and therefore it was prudently done of him to decline it. For if it be conſider'd what vaſt Numbers in the Chriſtian World there are, and always have been, who have never

ver troubled themſelves at all about this Matter, ſo much as to underſtand the Meaning of the very Words and Terms in which their ſeveral Creeds and Confeſſions have been conceiv'd and expreſs'd; and who therefore can be ſuppoſed, at moſt, only to agree in the Sound of Words, without Meaning; and if it be likewiſe conſider'd, that even the learned Men themſelves, who have thought it incumbent on them to ſettle the Faith and Worſhip of the Chriſtian World, when they came to examine Things, have ever given ſuch different and contrary Explications, and divided into ſuch oppoſite Parties, each hereticating and condemning the others, that they cannot poſſibly be ſuppoſed to mean the ſame Thing; and that the learned Contenders for what is eſteemed Orthodoxy at this very Day, are apparently as much divided among themſelves, as they are from thoſe whom they now call *Arians*: If theſe Things are conſider'd, I ſay, it muſt appear, that there never has been any real Harmony or Agreement at all among the Chriſtian Churches in this Point, ariſing from any rational Perſwaſion, after a free impartial Enquiry; without which, any other ſeeming Harmony and Agreement in Words only, can be of no Moment at all in Matters of Religion. The learned Author therefore had no Reaſon to take this for granted, unleſs he thinks it a Mark of their religious Harmony and Agreement, that they plainly appear for many Ages together, not at all to have conſidered or examined the Matter.

3*dly*, This learned Gentleman takes it for granted, that the Promiſes of the Goſpel concerning the Stability and Preſervation of the Church,

Church, relate not to the true Catholick inviſible Church, but to the outward viſible Church, or the Groſs of thoſe who make an external viſible Profeſſion of Chriſtianity. And his Miſtake here muſt have overthrown his Argument, even tho' he could have prov'd the Fundamentality of the Point in Debate, and the general Conſent of the viſible Church for 1400 Years; both which he yet aſſumes without Proof.

I hope this honourable and worthy Gentleman does not think, that the Promiſes of the Goſpel which relate to the Preſervation of the Church, are contrary to and inconſiſtent with thoſe Predictions and Propheſies of the ſame Goſpel, which plainly foretel that general grand Apoſtacy from the Chriſtian Faith and Practice under the Antichriſtian State, and which accordingly grew and prevail'd, 'till it had ſettled and ſpread it ſelf over the whole Chriſtian World for many Ages together. Now had this Antichriſtian Apoſtacy been more univerſal, and of much longer Continuance; had it laſted, not only 1400, but even 14000 Years; yet ſtill I conceive, while a certain Number, more or leſs, of ſincere Perſons, and faithful Diſciples of Chriſt, had been reſerved in the World, however ſcatter'd up and down, and as it were loſt in the general Corruption for a Time, the Perfections of God and the Truth of his Promiſes muſt ſtand ſecure. And if this learned Author thinks otherwiſe, I doubt he will find it an hard Matter, and even impoſſible, upon his own Principles, to defend either natural Religion againſt an Atheiſt, or Chriſtianity againſt a Deiſt, whatever ſhould become of the particular Point now in Debate. Since therefore this learned Author has plainly

miſtaken

miſtaken the Notion of the *Church* in Reference to the *Goſpel-Promiſes*; ſince the real general Conſent which he talks of, is only ſuppoſed without Proof; and ſince he has not proved, and I believe cannot prove, the Fundamentality of this Article, with regard to the different Sentiments of thoſe who now diſpute about it; I cannot but think that he has grounded all his Prejudices, and even the Perfections of God, and the Truth of Chriſtianity, upon a very ſlight and ſandy Foundation. In Conſequence of which, I think it muſt plainly reſt upon this learned and worthy Gentleman, either to retract what he has written, or explain himſelf farther, and ſupport his Scheme with much ſtronger Evidence.

4*thly*, As to what the learned Author has offer'd concerning the Dependance of Articles of Faith upon Conſequences; I hope he will forgive me the Preſumption of ſaying (what is moſt certainly true) that he has quite miſtaken the Queſtion, and by proving too much, has prov'd nothing at all to the real Purpoſe. He obſerves, that all Propoſitions which are not ſelf-evident, muſt depend ſome Way or other upon rational Inferences and Deductions; which is very true, but 'tis what no One Perſon in the World, that I know of, has ever deny'd. And ſo this worthy Gentleman may be perfectly eaſy, at leaſt in this Reſpect, as having no Adverſary. Conſequences, in this Debate, had never before been oppoſed to *ſelf-evident* Propoſitions, but to *expreſs Declarations* in Matters of pure Revelation, or Teſtimony, where the Divine Authority of Scripture is ſuppoſed to be received and own'd on both Sides, as a common Principle, upon antecedent Proofs. The Queſtion

ſtion therefore is this, whether any Thing ought to be made neceſſary to Salvation and Chriſtian Communion, that the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture has not clearly, expreſly, and definitively declared as ſuch. And with me, who have carried the Matter a little farther, the Queſtion alſo is, whether independent Facts are capable of yielding any ſuch Conſequences, and whether this Act of the Mind in drawing rational Inferences and Deductions muſt not be confined to Principles of Reaſon and Science, as diſtinct from Matters of Fact and Teſtimony. 'Tis here then, that the learned Author, if he would talk to the Purpoſe, ought to ſhew his Strength. Let him prove that every Thing neceſſary to Salvation is not clearly and expreſly determined by the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture; but that ſome ſuch Matters are left to the conſequential Determination of fallible Men in after Ages, according to the different ſcholaſtick Syſtems which might happen to prevail. Nay, let him prove it ſo much as poſſible, in the Nature of the Thing, to carry any Matter of *pure* Revelation beyond the expreſs Senſe and Import of the Revelation *it ſelf*, as abſtracted from all *really* diſtinct Conſequences whatever. What the learned Author can offer upon this, as it will be directly to the Purpoſe, ſo it ſhall be impartially and candidly conſider'd, and reply'd to.

Thus, my dear and ever faithful Friend, I have endeavour'd, briefly and clearly as I could, to anſwer the Deſign of your Letter; and I hope you will like it never the worſe, as coming to you in this Way. I am, *Sir*,

Your ſincere Friend, and humble Servant,

Marlborough, Nov. 16 1721. T. M.

THE POSTSCRIPT

Concerning

The real Agreement between the ATHANASIANS *and* SOCINIANS, *in the* TRINITARIAN *Controverſy.*

THE many unhappy Differences and ſharp Contentions among Chriſtians, which rend and divide the Church, and keep the Cauſe of Religion continually bleeding, are, and ever have been, by the Confeſſion of all, raiſed and maintained for Defence of *Truth*. Every Man who pretends to be of any Religion, and thinks himſelf capable of handling an Argument, is ready to declare his paſſionate Concern for *Truth*, and that he ſeeks it with the utmoſt Impartiality. But the great Conteſt is, Who has *this Treaſure* in Poſſeſſion? Where it is to be found? And to what Party it of Right belongs? It is evidently impoſſible to ſettle this Point of Right upon the Foot of any ſeparate divided Property; becauſe all Parties are ready to take up Arms in their own Defence, and the Matter is uncapable of any human Reference. For whoever ſhould aſſign the Property to any one Party in particular, muſt needs diſpleaſe all the reſt, and provoke them to revenge the Injury.

And

And there is no hopes, that a Propoſal of ſharing the Prize betwixt them would ever be accepted, ſince every one ſeems reſolved to have all or none. One would wiſh indeed, that the Matter for the preſent might, at Leaſt, peaceably reſt here; that Chriſtians would put themſelves out of a State of War, and agree to refer the Deciſion of the Point to the Laſt Day. For ſince they cannot determine it among themſelves, why ſhould they not in Equity leave it to God to decide betwixt them? But becauſe this, how reaſonable ſoever, is not, I fear, likely to be obtain'd; I can think but of one Expedient more with any probability of Succeſs for reconciling the Parties at Variance; and that is, by making it appear, that they are really agreed; that they have no different Notions or Ideas of the Things themſelves, which they contend about, but differ only about Words, and the manner of Expreſſion. And, methinks, Men ſhould not willingly contend for nothing, if they knew it to be nothing that they contend for; at leaſt thoſe, who would ſtill fight for *Aire*, and only to keep themſelves in *Breath*, could have no Pretence of contending for the *Truth*.

I do not think it an impoſſible Thing to ſhew, that the moſt famous and troubleſome Controverſies which have divided and diſtracted the Church, and put the Chriſtian World into a State of War, have been only about *Names*, and the Right of *Chriſtning Things*; while the oppoſite and contending Parties have had all the ſame Notions and Ideas of the *Things themſelves*. But I ſhall confine myſelf here to the proper Subject of this *Poſtcript*, with

regard to the real Conſent and Agreement between the *Athanaſians* and *Socinians*: Which muſt be allow'd to be a famous and pregnant Inſtance enough; ſince, perhaps, there never was any Contention in the Chriſtian Church, among thoſe at leaſt who have profeſs'd the ſame Rule of Faith, where the oppoſite Parties have more heartily contradicted each other, or ſeem'd to be at a wider Diſtance: The *Athanaſians* conſtantly aſſerting in the ſtrongeſt Terms Three Perſons in the one Eſſence, or Subſtance, of God, which the *Socinians* reject and ridicule; the *Socinians* alſo flatly denying the Supreme Deity or Godhead of Jeſus Chriſt, which the *Athanaſians* as ſtifly maintain: Upon this Account the *Socinians* have ever repreſented their Adverſaries as Fools, or Madmen; and theſe again, to be throughly reveng'd, have given the others to the Devil. But notwithſtanding this verbal Contradiction and Repugnancy of Sounds, I ſhall now ſhew, that they are both agreed in *Senſe*, ſo far as either the one or the other have any real Notion or Conception of the Thing; that the *Socinians* never did deny the Godhead of Chriſt, or the Trinity of Perſons in the *Athanaſian* Senſe; and on the other Hand, that the *Athanaſians* themſelves do and muſt deny the Godhead of Chriſt, and a Trinity of Perſons, in the *Socinian* Senſe: And conſequently, that it is not the *ſame Thing*, but very *different Things*, which the one affirm, and the other deny; and ſo that the Point of Difference is not in *Senſe*, but in *Sound* only.

The ſeeming Difference in Reference to the Trinity lies in this, that the *Socinians* affirm the *One God* to be but *One Perſon*, whereas the *Athanaſians*

ſians maintain, that He is *Three Perſons*. But this Contradiction is merely verbal, ariſing only from the different Senſe of the Word *Perſon*; which in the *Socinian* Senſe ſtands for an intelligent Agent, or intelligent active Subſtance; and conſequently, Three Perſons muſt, according to them, be Three intelligent active Subſtances: And 'tis in this Senſe only, that they deny Three Perſons in the One God. And do not all the *Athanaſians* with one Voice deny Three Perſons alſo in this Senſe, as much as their Adverſaries?

On the other Hand, the *Athanaſians*, as they declare, by a Perſon, mean a different, or really diſtinct Mode of Subſiſtence in the ſame Subſtance, or Eſſence, *i. e.* the Subſtance or Eſſence it ſelf, as thus or thus modify'd, and differently ſubſiſting under a certain Characteriſtical Manner, which they call perſonal. And no *Socinian*, or any Man elſe in his Senſes ever deny'd the Poſſibility or Truth of Three Perſons in one and the ſame Subſtance, or Three Perſons and One God in this Senſe. The *Socinians* have ever declared, that the *Logos*, *i. e.* according to them, the Eſſential Word, Reaſon, or Wiſdom, of God, is God himſelf; or the Divine Eſſence as thus modify'd, or ſubſiſting in ſuch a particular Manner; and that this is the Caſe with reſpect to any other Eſſential Attribute in God. And what if a *Socinian* calls that an *Eſſential Attribute*, which an *Athanaſian* calls a *Perſon*? While the Thing is evidently the ſame in Senſe, and they agree in one common Definition, where is the Harm? And however therefore our learned *Athanaſians* may affect to keep up a certain unintelligible *Medium*; whenever they ſhall think

think fit to ſpeak out their Minds clearly in this Caſe, I dare be accountable for it, that either they will agree with *Socinians*, or not differ from *Tritheiſts*.

The other verbal Contradiction between the *Athanaſians* and *Socinians*, is this, that the one affirm, and the other deny, the Supreme Deity or Godhead of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

This indeed looks like a very ſtartling Difference in *Words*, and is the very Thing by which many in this Controverſy affright and terrify the common People; who having their Paſſions deeply pre-engaged, and being ſtruck with Horror at the very *Sound*, are uncapable of conſidering the Matter, and attending to the real State of the Caſe; and ſo run away in a ſort of Frenzy, crying out eternal Vengeance and Damnation! Now, notwithſtanding this ſenſeleſs and uncharitable Clamour; that there is no poſſible conceivable Difference between the *Athanaſians* and *Socinians* in this Matter, will ſufficiently appear, if we conſider what both Parties ſay in the Caſe, how far they agree, and wherein they can be ſuppoſed to differ. The great and ſtartling Charge, as I have obſerved, is, that the *Socinians*, and indeed the *Arians*, and *Euſebians* too, deny the ſtrict and proper, *i. e.* the Supreme Deity of Chriſt.

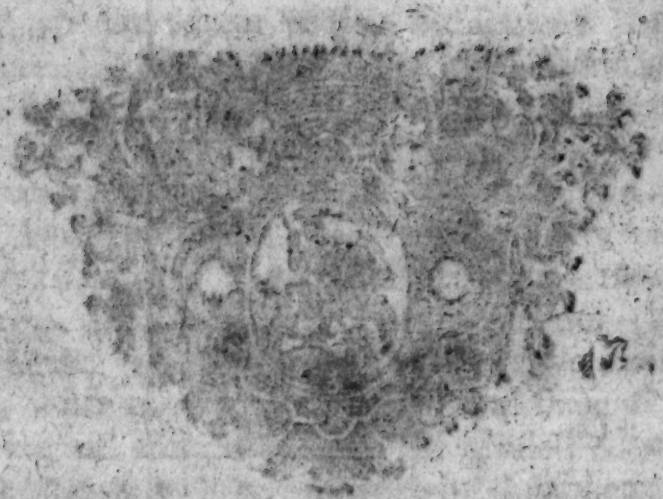
But I ſhall now ſhew, that the *Socinians*, and the other Parties here referr'd to, do not, and never did deny the Supreme Deity or Godhead of Chriſt, under any Senſe in which it is affirmed by the *Athanaſians*; and that the *Athanaſians* themſelves do and muſt deny it likewiſe in the Senſe that 'tis deny'd by the *Socinians*; and conſequently, that it is not the *ſame*

Thing that is affirmed by one Party, and deny'd by the other; but quite *different Things*, which are equally either affirmed or deny'd by all Parties alike. And this ſeeming wide Difference, where there is none in Reality, ariſes from the different Uſe of Words in the Babel of Languages. From hence it comes about, that what in the *Socinian* Senſe, (and indeed the common Senſe of Mankind about all other Matters,) is Two diſtinct and different *Perſons*; is in the *Athanaſian* Senſe, if any ſuch Senſe there be, but one and the *ſame Perſon*. But let the different Meaning of the Word *Perſon*, as it is uſed in this Part of the Argument by the oppoſite Parties, be once clearly ſettled, and both Sides will ſoon appear to be of the ſame Mind about the Things themſelves, and the remaining Difference will be only in Words. The *Sociniani*, by a Perſon, mean an intelligent Agent, or intelligent active Subſtance; and therefore God ſubſiſting under the Character of his Eſſential Word, Reaſon, or Wiſdom, muſt with them be a diſtinct and different Perſon from the Man Chriſt, or Jeſus of *Nazareth*. And from hence, when they deny the Supreme Deity of Chriſt, they mean no more than this, that the Man Chriſt was not the ſame Agent, the ſame intelligent active Subſtance, with the Supreme God. And ſince the affirming of this would be the groſſeſt Contradiction, as well as downright Blaſphemy, the *Athanaſians* muſt neceſſarily deny it as well as the *Socinians*; that is, they muſt deny Chriſt to be the Supreme God, or the ſame Perſon with God, in the ſame Senſe that the *Socinians* do; and muſt neceſſarily allow, that in the

Socinian

Socinian Senſe, they are Two diſtinct and infinitely different Perſons.

Thus far then the *Athanaſians* muſt unavoidably agree with the *Socinians*. And here I muſt call upon all the learned *Athanaſians* of this Age, to make it appear, that the *Socinians*, *Arians*, *Euſebians*, or any other Party among Chriſtians, ever deny'd the Perſonal Union of the Supreme God with the Man Chriſt Jeſus, under any Senſe in which they themſelves can poſſibly conceive or affirm it. Let them do this, or for Shame be ſilent; and not make a Noiſe and Outcry in the World againſt others, as if they wanted ſomething Eſſential to Chriſtianity, while they are not able to fix any intelligible Point of Difference.



A

LETTER

To the Reverend

Dr. *WATERLAND*,

Occasion'd by

His Late WRITINGS in Defence of the ATHANASIAN Hypothesis.

LETTER

LETTER

DE WATERLAND,

DR. WATERLAND'S

His Late WRITINGS in De-



A LETTER

To the Reverend

Dr. *WATERLAND.*

SIR,

WHILE you are contending with Dr. *Clarke*, Mr. *Whiſton*, and other learned Adverſaries, about the true and genuine Senſe of Scripture, and Primitive Antiquity; I cannot but obſerve with Wonder, that you have, by I know not what ſort of Contrivance, really changed the State of the Queſtion; which is now no longer about the Senſe of Scripture and Antiquity, but about *common Senſe* itſelf, and the very *firſt Principles of Reaſon*.

I find you are not agreed with your learned Adverſaries, in any *one Thing*; but what is with them a ſelf-evident Truth, may be with you a Contradiction; and on the other Hand, what they declare as an expreſs Contradiction, may be, and often is, in your Account, a great and neceſſary Truth. 'Tis plain therefore, that the Controverſy betwixt the *Athanaſians* and the reſt of the World, can never be brought to an Iſſue upon the Foot it now ſtands. There is no diſputing to any Purpoſe, till we are firſt agreed upon ſome common Principles, or at leaſt, till the Point be determined, whether there be any ſuch Thing as common Principles of Senſe and Reaſon among Mankind or not. To what Purpoſe would a Set of Workmen pretend to agree in the meaſuring their Work by one and the *ſame Rule*, while they can't agree about the Nature and Dimenſions of the Rule itſelf? Some contending that it is one Foot long, others two, others three; and ſome again, that it is of no determinate Length at all; that it is neither finite nor infinite, ſtreight nor crooked; or at leaſt, of ſo myſtical a Nature, that 'tis impoſſible to determine of what Length it is, or whether it be a Rule or not. Suppoſe all the Aſtronomers in the World ſhould be agreed, that the *Caroline* Tables are the beſt, and moſt exact for determining the Cœleſtial Motions; while they diſpute about the Arithmetical Principles and numeral Conſtruction of the Tables themſelves; ſome contending they ought to be underſtood and apply'd according to the decimal, others according to the duodecimal, and others again according to the ſexageſimal Account and Denomination; nay, they

they diſpute whether the Mark of Unity in the Tables, ought not to ſtand for three Units; and whether the Figure 3 muſt not ſometimes ſtand for Three, and ſometimes for One; and this too in a Senſe, which no Body is ever like to find out: Muſt not other People from hence be tempted to conclude, either that *theſe Tables* can be of *no Uſe* at all; or at leaſt that *thoſe Gentlemen* find it for their Intereſt, to keep the Secret to themſelves, that Men might not too generally arrive to the Knowledge of Aſtronomy? For my own Part, I cannot think that the Scriptures are writ upon more unintelligible Principles than the *Caroline* Tables, ſince I am ſure they were deſign'd for a more general Uſe, and in a Matter of infinitely greater Importance: And I make no doubt, but that there are ſome common Principles, in which Men *may*, and in reality *muſt* agree, whether they acknowledge it or not. However, when I ſee a Man denying in Words thoſe common Principles, I cannot preſently impeach his Honeſty, or conclude that he has any ill Deſign upon me; becauſe 'tis poſſible his Underſtanding may be ſo far enſlav'd to an Hypotheſis, and his Mind darkned with general, confus'd, and ambiguous Sounds, that he may not ſee or obſerve the Inconſiſtency or Contradiction of his own Words; nay, perhaps he may be really of the ſame Mind with his Adverſaries, and ſee and know himſelf to be ſo, but yet may think himſelf bound in Conſcience to talk unintelligibly, and to keep above the groſs impure Regions of *common Senſe*. However, I think it worth while to enquire, whether the Chriſtian Rule of Faith be indeed intelligible;

tellgible; and whether you have not defended the *Athanaſian* Hypotheſis upon Principles, which might ſerve equally to defend Tranſubſtantiation, or any other Contradiction in the World?

Whoever reads your Writings with Attention, muſt needs obſerve in how confuſed, general, and doubtful a Senſe, you all along make uſe of the Words, *God*, *Hypoſtaſis*, *Unity*, and *Identity*; to each of which Words you have ſeveral Meanings, which you take out, or ſlip in, alter and vary at Pleaſure, and juſt as the Exigence requires, without giving your Reader any fair Notice of it: Nay, if you happen to drop any thing that may ſeem to glance at what you aim at, and give one any Light into your real Meaning, 'tis ſo nicely guarded, and deliver'd with ſuch extreme Caution and Warineſs, as if you was afraid of nothing ſo much, as of being underſtood. However, ſince you have frankly, and thus far fairly declared againſt the *Sabellian* Senſe of Unity and Identity, as apply'd to God, Subſtance, and Hypoſtaſis or Perſon; it will be worth while to enquire, whether you can have any other than a Tritheiſtick Meaning; or whether you have indeed hit upon any Medium of Unity, any Principle of Individuation, that can ſave you from Tritheiſm. You give us Leave to conceive of your Meaning, with reſpect to Hypoſtaſis or *Perſon*, in the common authoriſed Senſe of the Word, as it ſtands for an *Intelligent Agent*, or Intelligent Active Subſtance: For ſince Intelligence and Agency, or Active Power, are only Properties or Attributes, we muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe the Subſtance itſelf to be the Agent, the Thing acting, or the Subject which is endued with

with ſelf conſcious Intelligent Agency. But indeed, I need not take Pains to prove this, becauſe you acknowledge, and often repeat it, that by Hypoſtaſis or Perſon, you mean not a Mode only, but a real *ſubſtantial* Perſon. Now in the ſame Senſe that one Perſon is one Intelligent Agent, or Active Subſtance; 'tis evident that Three Perſons muſt be Three Intelligent, Active Subſtances. I doubt not but you will be here ready to clap in your other Senſe of one Subſtance; and cry out, that Three Agents are but One *Undivided Subſtance*: I ſhall ſuppoſe for the preſent, this Compoſition of Subſtances to be *another Senſe* of one Subſtance, that I may allow you, according to your Talent, to abound in *different Senſes*; yet ſtill I ſay, that under the ſame Senſe in which One Perſon is One Intelligent Active Subſtance, in that Senſe *preciſely*, Three Perſons muſt be Three Intelligent, Active Subſtances: and the Denial of this, muſt paſs for an expreſs Contradiction, even in the Schools, upon the laſt Pinch; becauſe it would be affirming and denying the ſame thing at the ſame time, and in the very ſame Senſe. And indeed, when you are forced to own, that the Three Perſons are but One Perſon, and *That* One Perſon again Three Perſons, in different Senſes and Reſpects; why can you not as well ſay, that in the ſame different Senſes and Reſpects there are *Three Subſtances*, and yet but *One Subſtance*? The ſame Nature of the Thing, the very Reaſon and Neceſſity, muſt lead you to ſay the one, as well as the other, if you dar'd ſpeak out; but ſince you are obſtinate, and will not do it, I challenge you to give any better Reaſon for it than this, That it would not

ſo

ſo well ſuit with your *Hypotheſis*; which being inconſiſtent with it ſelf, muſt *really* overthrow what it only *ſeems* to eſtabliſh. I believe every one muſt allow, that One Independent, Omniſcient, All-powerful Agent, is the true and proper Definition of *One God*; conſequently Three ſuch Agents, which your Hypotheſis lays you under a Neceſſity of admitting, muſt be *Three Gods*. You will ſay doubtleſs, that they ought to be conſidered as united in One Undivided Subſtance; and ſo the *Three Perſons* are but *One God*: But then you ſay likewiſe, that, as thus conſider'd, they are but *One Perſon*; and therefore ſtill they muſt be Three Gods, in the ſame Senſe that they are *Three Perſons*.

But to let the Reader ſee a little farther the Excellency of your Hypotheſis, I ſhall now ſhew, that it lays you under a Neceſſity all along, of uſing the Word *God* in no leſs than Four different Senſes; in every one of which there is ſomething included, eſſential to the Nature and Definition of the Thing, that is left out in all the reſt; and conſequently, they cannot be God in the *ſame Senſe*, or one and the *ſame God*. When you apply the Word *God* to the Perſon of the *Father*, and ſay God the Father, or God who is the Father, 'tis evident you muſt identify God with the Perſon of the Father; and conſequently, in the Nature and Definition of God, as thus underſtood, you muſt include the Idea of Unorigination, or abſolute, intrinſick, and perſonal Self-neceſſity, or Self-exiſtence: which being peculiar and eſſential to God the Father, cannot be taken into the Nature and Definition of God, when the ſame Name is apply'd to any other Perſon. Again, when you ſay *God* the

Son,

Son, you muſt here, in the Nature and Definition of *God*, include the Ideas of *Filiation*, and communicated Subſiſtence from the *Father only*: which being eſſential to God the Son, cannot make a Part of the complex Idea expreſs'd by the word God, when it is made uſe of as the Name or Denomination of any other. In like manner the Property of Proceſſion, or communicated Subſiſtence, both from the *Father* and the *Son*, muſt alter the Signification of the ſame Word, when apply'd to the Spirit as *God*. And laſtly, When you apply the ſame Word, God, to all Three *Perſons* conjunctly, or conſider'd as united in your one *undivided Subſtance*, you join all the inconſiſtent Ideas together in *One God*, who is then likewiſe ſaid to be *One Perſon*; as if all theſe contrary and incompatible Properties could poſſibly exiſt in one and the ſame ſimple individual Subject or Subſtance. You will ſay perhaps, that tho' the word God has theſe different perſonal Senſes, from whence the real Diſtinction of *Perſon* muſt ariſe; yet theſe Perſons, whether conſider'd diſtinctly or conjunctly, are One and the *ſame God*. Which is as much as ſaying, that tho' you uſe the word God in Four different *Senſes*, yet theſe different Senſes are but one and the *ſame Senſe*; but ſtill God in another and another Senſe, will be another and another God, do what you can. And indeed, the Abſurdity here is ſo groſs and apparent, that 'tis impoſſible for any Colourings of Sophiſtry to hide it: For who does not, or may not ſee, that what in the common Language and Cant of the Schools, is call'd the *ſame Thing* in different Senſes, muſt in Truth and Reality be quite *different Things*? For as theſe different Senſes muſt

muſt neceſſarily alter the Nature and Definition of the Thing; *the ſame Thing* in Sound, will be in Truth really and *eſſentially* different *Things*: which *different Things* trump'd upon the Underſtanding, under the *ſame Sound*, may be as contrary and incompatible, as Light and Darkneſs, Truth and Falſhood. And that they are ſo in your Hypotheſis, is evident from hence, that you have not been able to eſtabliſh the Notion of *One God* in any Senſe at all, without ſuppoſing and allowing the *Three Perſons* to be but One and the *ſame Perſon*, in the *ſame Senſe* that God is *One*. And here I might fairly leave it to your Choice, whether you will take *Sabellianiſm* or *Tritheiſm*, ſince you are evidently ſuſpended in the Air, and without any Foundation betwixt 'em both. However, for Speculation ſake, and becauſe I am alſo willing to do you all poſſible Juſtice; I ſhall conſider your Hypotheſis a little farther, with reſpect to your *One Individual Subſtance*, as a Principle of Identity and Individuation; but before I do this, I muſt inform the Reader what I take to be your real Notion, that you may explain your ſelf more diſtinctly to the World, if I am miſtaken about it; or mend your Hypotheſis, if you ſhould find it defective. Since then the *Sabellian* Notion of One numerically ſimple and individual Subſtance, muſt neceſſarily overthrow the Foundation of Three real Perſons, and by Conſequence be abſolutely inconſiſtent with a real Trinity; there was plainly a Neceſſity of ſuppoſing Three ſuch ſimple, perſonal, individual Subſtances or Eſſences; which yet you will not call Subſtances or Eſſences in the Plural, becauſe being all equally and infinitely extended,

extended, they muſt, as you ſuppoſe by their Ubiquitary Preſences, pervade each other; and, by a ſort of mutual Penetration of Eſſences, become One numerical Compound, or individual Subſtance.

And thus the Three, Simple, Perſonal Eſſences, of which the one Compound Subſtance conſiſts, by their intimate Union and Inſeparability with reſpect to Space or Expanſion, are, as I conceive, in your Account individuated; and after this manner you have a Trinity in Unity. It will be difficult, and perhaps impoſſible, to gueſs at your Meaning, by *intimate Union, Inhabitation, mutual Penetration, Undividedneſs*, and the like, if you do not borrow all your Ideas of this Kind from the Nature and Properties of Space, or Expanſion.

Preſuming therefore, that you have not Faculties different from other Men, and that you would be thought to uſe Words with ſome Meani g or other; I ſhall here take leave to make Two or Three Remarks upon this Way of Talking.

1. 'Tis manifeſt that you all along confound *intimate Union, Undividedneſs*, or *Inſeparability*, with *numerical Unity, Individuality*, or *Identity*; tho' *theſe* are as diſtinct and different, with reſpect to the Things themſelves ſignified by 'em, as any Ideas you can poſſibly have in your Mind. 'Tis evident, that where different Things are conſidered as united, be the Union never ſo cloſe, intimate, or inſeparable, the Things themſelves muſt ſtill be ſuppos'd to retain their proper Individualities, or numerical Diverſity, with reſpect to their real, actual Exiſtence, as much as if they were not ſo united. And whenever we loſe or let ſlip the

Idea of actually distinct Individuality, or numerial Diversity, we can no longer consider it under the Notion of a *Union*, or *different Things united*: but must necessarily conceive of it, as an *absolute Identity* of the *same Thing* with *it self*. And tho' *different Things*, thus united, may make *one Compound* under a *different Denomination*, and express'd by a *collective Name*; yet they can never make *one* Compound of the *same* Denomination, without confounding the most different Ideas, and destroying the Nature and Reason of Things. Let us put the Case; for Instance, that of the Soul and Body, as Two Substances, distinguished by some essential and incommunicable Attributes; as suppose, intelligent Agency and Solidity: And now let these Two Substances be supposed to be united as closely, intimately, and inseparably, as you please; let them mutually inhabit, and pervade, and penetrate each other, or what you will; yet still while they retain their really distinct, essential, and incommunicable Properties, you must necessarily conceive of them as Two Substances, as much as if they were locally separated, and at an infinite Distance. Now, tho' the Consequence, or Result of such an Union, might be One Compound under a general Denomination, or *One Man*; where the Term, *Man*, is taken collectively for the Two Substances of Soul and Body united: yet 'tis impossible that their mutual Union, of what Kind soever, should make *One Substance*, without destroying the first Supposition of *Two Substances*; and also denying, what is at the same Time granted, that they have essentially distinct and incommunicable Properties. If any One after all this

this would ſtill reſolutely maintain, that the Soul and Body, by their Union, ceaſe to be *Two Subſtances*, and are really identify'd into One and the *ſame Subſtance*; what would be thought of him, but that he was under ſome unhappy Neceſſity of confounding and deſtroying the Nature and Reaſon of Things, by uſing indifferently, and without Diſtinction, the Words, White and Black, Light and Darkneſs?

Now to apply this general Principle to your Hypotheſis: You have been oblig'd to allow Three real Hypoſtaſes, or Three really diſtinct, and actually exiſting, perſonal Eſſences: And this you were under a Neceſſity of doing, to avoid *Sabellianiſm*, and to ſupport the really diſtinct and incommunicable Properties, which are eſſentially peculiar to each of the Three Perſons. But here, ſtartled at what you had granted, and being well aware that this would be undiſguiſed Tritheiſm, you endeavour to make all up again, by running into the contrary Extreme, and contradicting all that you had ſaid. For now, rather than loſe the Unity, your Three Hypoſtaſes, or *Perſonal Eſſences*, ſhall be but *One Hypoſtaſis*, or *Perſonal Eſſence*. But how comes this about? how is it poſſible, that three Subſtances, or Eſſences, ſhould be but one ſuch? Why, by a certain unconceivable Inhabitation, and mutual Pervaſion, or Penetration of Eſſences, which *really* identifies them into *one* and the *ſame Subſtance*. But here lies the Miſchief: If they are not only *cloſely* and *intimately united*, but *really identified*, you have *really* loſt the *Trinity*; and have created your Three Hypoſtaſes, to ſhew that you could annihilate them again: If they are *only*

united, and *not really identified*, you have *really* loſt the *Unity*, or *Sameneſs* of Subſtance. But if they are *really identified*, and not *really identified*, which is what you indeed ſay, I think it muſt be evident to common Senſe, that your Hypotheſis is *really* a *Contradiction*. Here, as I expect, you will fly to your different *Reſpects* and *Senſes*, the laſt Refuge of ſcholaſtick Fencing, which never fails of bearing off a Contradiction upon the cloſeſt Thruſt. And by the Force of this Diſtinction, I muſt own, that Light may be Darkneſs, and Darkneſs Light: not indeed in the *ſame Senſe*, as every one muſt allow; but he who cannot admit it in *different Senſes*, will never be able to fathom the Depths of many learned elaborate *Defences*. However, this Diſtinction here, after what has been ſaid, cannot help you; nor can you get off with it, without a Confeſſion more ſhameful than any Error of the mere Underſtanding; namely, that by *Unity* you mean *Multiplicity*; by Identity, Diverſity; and by one and the *ſame Thing*, three or four quite *different Things*. But Truth needs none of theſe *Doublings*; nor is it really ſerv'd by all the Subtilty and Windings of the Serpent. You would never want a different *Sound*, where the *Senſe* is different, if you had not one *Senſe* to conceal, while you are uncovering *another*; and *this* again muſt be wrapt up, while *that* is ſuffer'd to take a little Air: Whereas, ſhould both in one View be expos'd to the open Light, the *Myſtery* would become a *Jeſt*; and the Reader muſt exchange his *Wonder*, for a Paſſion of a *merrier Strain*.

2. I muſt obſerve to you farther, that if your Principle of Identity, or Sameneſs of Subſtance, be admitted; it cannot in the leaſt ſerve the Cauſe

Cauſe you have been contending for. It will ſtand as well in a different, or contrary, *Hypotheſis*, as in *yours*; and an *Heretick* will find his Account in it, as much as a *good Chriſtian*: Nay, it will help the *Euſebians* and *Arians* out of all their Hardſhips, and enable them to be *Orthodox*, without changing their *Principles*. There is no Neceſſity of ſuppoſing the *LOGOS* to be a finite Subſtance, whatever the Manner of *Derivation* from the Father be, whether by an *Eternal Generation* before all Times and Ages, or by a *Temporary Generation*; ſince one may as eaſily and conſiſtently ſuppoſe the *Infiniteneſs* as the *Finiteneſs*, even of a *created Subſtance*: For ſince the firſt ſelf-exiſtent independent Cauſe is allowed by all to be Omnipreſent, and All-powerful, and can, whenever he pleaſes, with the ſame Eaſe and Freedom, act every where alike; 'tis plain, that nothing can reſtrain or limit his *Power*, in the Production of a finite Being, but his *Will*. Now ſuppoſing the *LOGOS* to be a diſtinct Hypoſtaſis from the Father, and ſuppoſing him likewiſe infinite, or every where exiſting, whether created or uncreated; the ſame univerſal intimate Union, and mutual Penetration of Hypoſtaſes or ſimple and individual Perſonal Eſſences, muſt neceſſarily follow; which is the Ground and Foundation of your *Identity*, or *Sameneſs* of Subſtance.

Here will be the ſame *Inhabitation*, the ſame mutual *Pervaſion*, the ſame *Undividedneſs*, with reſpect to Space or Expanſion; and conſequently the ſame Indentity of Subſtance. So that your Method will ſerve to *identify*, not only God with God, one divine Hypoſtaſis with another, as they are conſidered in your Hypotheſis; but even an uncreated with a created Subſtance,

or God with a Creature. And now, whether all you call Hereticks, will thank you for what you have done, I cannot ſay; but this I am ſure of, that bating the uncharitable *Manner of the Thing*, you have done them no harm. But,

3. The great and ſtartling Difficulty which attends your Principle of Identification, is this, That it muſt neceſſarily identify all Subſtances, whether finite or infinite, with the one infinite ſelf-exiſting Subſtance. Inhabitation, mutual Pervaſion, Penetration and Co-exiſtence, Inſeparability and Undividedneſs of Subſtance or Eſſence, is with you the general Principle of Identification, or that which makes one Subſtance numerically the ſame. Now, whatever is ſufficient to identify Subſtance every where, muſt do the like any where; and becauſe 'tis impoſſible for any finite Subſtance any where to exiſt, without co-exiſting, or undividedly exiſting with the one infinite Subſtance, by an intimate Union, mutual Pervaſion, and Undividedneſs of Eſſence; this muſt, upon your Principle, identify all finite Subſtances with the One Subſtance of God: And being thus identified with one and the ſame Divine Subſtance, they cannot be different *Subſtances* from each other. 'Tis true, there will ſtill remain the different, incommunicable and diſtinct individuating Properties, by which we commonly diſtinguiſh different Things from one another; but the moſt different and incompatible Properties are very conſiſtent, *you know*, with *one* and the *ſame Subſtance*. And ſeeing they are thus conſiſtent, when conſider'd as every where, they muſt be alſo conſiſtent any where conſidered, or where-ever you conſider them in particular. So that I cannot ſee

but

but your Principle of *Identity*, if you would be thought to mean any Thing, muſt coincide with that of *Spinoſa*, that there is a Conſubſtantiality, or Identity of *Eſſence*, betwixt God and the *Univerſe*; or that God is *all Subſtance*, and there is no other Subſtance, but the one Neceſſary, Self-exiſtent or *Divine Subſtance*. This looks like a very unlucky Appendage to your *Hypotheſis*; and a dead Weight upon *it*, which I ſhould be glad to know how you will get rid of. Perhaps the beſt way may be, to own that you have talk'd without Ideas, and deſire that what you have ſaid may paſs for *nothing*; and this, I believe, will be really the Caſe, as to the far greater Part of the learned World, whether you *deſire it* or no.

Whether this way of Talking about Subſtances, or *Subſtrata*, as the *Subjects* and *Supports* of diſtinct individuating *Properties*, be agreeable to the real Exiſtence and Nature of Things or not, is not my Buſineſs here to enquire: 'Tis ſufficient to ſhew, that if it be granted, it will ſtand good in *one Hypotheſis* as well as *another*; and muſt be attended with Conſequences, which you cannot bear. I am very well perſuaded, however, that the true Syſtem of Nature, when rightly underſtood, is ſtill more inconſiſtent with your *Hypotheſis*; but we need go no farther, ſince your *own Account* of Things, if you will ſtand to it, is ſufficient to overthrow all that you have ſaid. If you loſe your *One Subſtance*, you are gone, as having no other Principle of Identity for *One God*; and while you will retain it, I think you cannot poſſibly, in the *ſame Senſe*, ſuppoſe *more Subſtances* than *One*: And therefore an *Athanaſian*, an *Euſebian*, an *Arian*, a *Socinian*, and even an Atheiſt, will

equally find their different and contrary Accounts, in *one* and the *ſame Thing*. And is not *Chriſtianity*, think you, extreamly clear'd and mended, by this ſort of *Philoſophy*; at firſt brought in by the *Fathers*, from the *Pagan Schools*, and now eſpouſed a-new, and farther improved in Defenſe of the Holy Scriptures, by a Learned *modern Divine*? Can you indeed ſit down, and with Satisfaction bleſs your ſelf upon the Review, while you have been filling the *Heads* of Chriſtian People with *empty Sounds*, and their Hearts with *Antichriſtian Rage*, againſt all thoſe, who will not explain St. *Paul* and the *Scriptures*, by *Plato*, *Ariſtotle*, and the *Heathen Metaphyſicks*? Really, *Sir*, if Chriſtianity cannot be underſtood or defended, but upon ſuch Principles *as theſe*, I fear you will never be able to *underſtand* or *defend* it at all.

But could you clear your Hypotheſis, relating to the Trinity and Unity, from Abſurdity and Contradiction, as I believe you cannot; yet there is another Difficulty ſtill behind, more ſtiff and inflexible than the former; and that is, how to apply your Principles, with any Truth or Conſiſtency, to the Chriſtian Doctrine of the *Incarnation*, and the acknowledged *One Perſon* of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, after *the Word was made Fleſh*. Could you therefore avoid Tritheiſm, without falling upon *Sabellianiſm*, which is what you have not been able to do; yet ſtill, I can't but think, that it will be altogether impoſſible, in *your Way*, to avoid *Neſtorianiſm*, without falling upon *ſomething worſe*. I hope it will not be look'd upon as a Mark of Irreligion or Profaneneſs, to ſuppoſe that Chriſtianity is an *intelli-*

gible

gible Thing; or to enquire about the Meaning of certain *Words*, which are now made uſe of, in Matters of the greateſt Importance, tho' they are not to be found, thus applied, in the Scripture it ſelf. I have the greateſt Deference for the Doctrines of the *Church*; but then I muſt ſuppoſe that the *Church* deſigns to be underſtood; for otherwiſe her *Articles* of *Faith* will not be *really Doctrines*, but *Words only*. And as for our *own Church* of *England*, I can be very confident, that ſhe never once intended to bind any of her Members to Impoſſibilities, or expected to have her *Articles* underſtood, in any other than a *Scripture Senſe*; and conſequently, not to pin down Men to the *Athanaſian Senſe*, farther than it may be made intelligible, and conſiſtent with the *true Senſe* of Scripture. Upon this fair and reaſonable Suppoſition therefore, which cannot be denied me, I muſt apply my ſelf to you, *Sir*, for a little farther Satisfaction, in what Senſe we are to underſtand the *Athanaſian* Doctrine, concerning the *Incarnation* and *One Perſon* of Jeſus Chriſt. And here I believe all the World muſt own, that I could not have made a more proper perſonal Application, ſince you are univerſally acknowledged as One of the Ableſt and moſt Learned of our modern *Athanaſians*; and your Obligation to give us all reaſonable Satisfaction, is the more *peculiar*, as you have in a very particular and diſtinguiſhing Manner, eſpouſed and intereſted your ſelf in the *Athanaſian* Cauſe.

The common *Doctrine*, or at leaſt *verbal Declaration*, of the *Athanaſians* is this, That Chriſt, or the *Logos*, by his Incarnation, aſſumed the whole human Nature, *i. e.* a true Body, and a

rational

rational Soul, into a perſonal Union with his Eternal and Divine Perſon; and ſo ever remains Two diſtinct *Natures* in *One Perſon*. Now here the great and ſeemingly unſurmountable Difficulty lies in this; How it is poſſible, in any intelligible Senſe, that the perſonal *Logos*, an infinite, eternal, and neceſſarily exiſting Agent, ſhould be the ſelf-ſame Perſon with a finite created human Soul; *i. e.* how Two ſuch infinitely diſtant and different Beings, Agents, and Subſtances, can be One Perſon, the ſelf-ſame I, the ſame He, or the ſame common individual Subject of the moſt eſſential and infinitely different Properties and Actions? Here then it is certain, that the Words, *One Perſon*, *One Agent*, *One numerical Self*, &c. cannot poſſibly be taken in any hitherto known or explain'd Senſe; ſince to ſay, that a finite, created, human Soul, is the ſame intelligent Agent, the ſelf-ſame individual Perſon, the ſame Subſtance, the ſame perſonal I, or He, with *God* Infinite, Eternal, Uncreated, and neceſſarily Exiſtent; I ſay, to affirm this in any hitherto known or explain'd Senſe, muſt be not only the groſſeſt Abſurdity and Contradiction, but downright Blaſphemy alſo. When therefore you, with other *Athanaſians*, in a Senſe peculiar to your ſelves, aſſert this; it cannot appear, till you have explain'd your Meaning, whether you contradict any Body or no. Perhaps, if you were able and willing to explain your ſelves, we might be found all of one Mind, and the Difference might lie in Words only. Nothing can be more unreaſonable therefore, in you and your Party, than thus openly to condemn other People, as dangerous Hereticks, while you will

not

not tell them in what Senſe, they can, or ought to be Orthodox. 'Tis certain, that in your *Hypotheſis*, when you ſay, *Chriſt is God*, you muſt mean *One Perſon*, and when you ſay, *Chriſt is Man*, you muſt mean *another Perſon*, according to the known eſtabliſh'd meaning of the Word Perſon, in the *common Senſe* of Mankind: Now if in *common Senſe* you have Two *Perſonal* Saviours, *Two Chriſts*, and Two *Sons* of *God*; *One*, Infinite, Eternal, and Uncreated; and the *Other*, Finite and Created in Time: I ſay, if this be ſo in *common Senſe*; and conſequently, if the *Scripture* cannot be underſtood in, but is a Contradiction to, *common Senſe*; you ought in all Reaſon and Conſcience, to tell us in *what Senſe* it can and muſt be underſtood; or fairly own, that it is abſolutely unintelligible, and cannot be underſtood in *any Senſe at all*. However, I am very much inclined to think, that it is not the *Scripture Account* of Things, but *your Account*; not the *Chriſtian Revelation*, but *your Hypotheſis*; that is inconſiſtent with, and contradictory to, *common Senſe*. For tho' the *Heads* and *Leaders* of Parties may, yet I cannot think that the *Holy Ghoſt*, in the Chriſtian Revelation, would uſe Words under a different Senſe from what they had been ever uſed among Mankind before, without giving us the leaſt Notice of it. I ſhall content my ſelf therefore to ſhew, that your Hypotheſis is a Contradiction to common Senſe, and muſt make the whole Chriſtian Revelation ſo too; and then leave you either to affix ſome other Senſe to Scripture, or quit your Principles, as you ſhall find Occaſion. It is granted by all *Athanaſians*, that Chriſt had a compleat and perfect

Human

Human Nature; and that after the Incarnation, he wanted nothing that is eſſential to *Man*. But Human Intelligent Agency is eſſential to Man, as ſuch; and 'tis plainly impoſſible to have any Notion or Idea of Humanity, or Human Nature, without including the Ideas of Human Intelligency, and Human Agency; and Human Intelligent Agency is the ſame Thing, in the common Senſe of Mankind, with Human Perſonality: From hence then, I think, it is plain, that 'tis impoſſible to have any Idea at all of Human Nature, without including Human Intelligent Agency, or Human Perſonality; and conſequently, it will be alike impoſſible to conceive of a Man actually Exiſting, Underſtanding, and Acting, without conceiving him to be a Human Perſon. To abſtract Human Nature then from Human Perſonality, and to talk of a true and proper Man, really exiſting, and acting *as Man*, who is not a Human Perſon, is to renounce and deny all the Principles of Reaſon and common Senſe, and to make Words ſignify nothing at all; and all this to avoid ſaying, that the Name *Chriſt*, is taken collectively, as being put for *Two Perſons*, a Divine Perſon, and a Human Perſon; tho' 'tis impoſſible, in the *Athanaſian* Hypotheſis, that the Thing ſhould be otherwiſe. And I here challenge you, upon your own Principles, to make it appear as poſſible, how Chriſt ſhould not be a *Human Perſon*, and yet be a true and real *Man*; or to diveſt him of a *Human Perſonality*, without robbing him of his *Human Nature* too. You allow him to be a Divine Perſon; and I think I have proved, that, in your Hypotheſis, he muſt be

a Human Perſon too; and conſequently, that the *Son of God*, and the *Son of Man*, muſt, upon your Principles, be Two different Perſons, under the common Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and acting in one common Capacity of Mediation: And to ſuppoſe otherwiſe, muſt oblige you to make one imaginary compound Perſon of Two ſimple and real Perſons; of Two infinitely different *Intelligent Agents*; of which compound Perſon, every Thing that can be affirmed or denied, will at the ſame Time be equally *true* and *falſe*. In your Hypotheſis, it is as falſe that *Chriſt* ſuffered and died for our Sins, as it is *true* that *Chriſt* is *God*: That Chriſt is Finite and Infinite, Created and Uncreated, and that he is God and Man, are both true, and both falſe. That *his Father is greater than He*, and that he *did not*, while he was upon Earth, *know the Day of Judgment*, are both true, and yet both as *falſe* as they are *true*. This, Sir, is your Divinity: But alas! for the *Dullneſs* of *Hereticks!* all this comes about for want of diſtinguiſhing between the *different Senſes*, in which the *ſame Thing* may be true and falſe at the ſame Time. And alas! again for the *Wiſdom* of *Chatholicks!* theſe *different Senſes* will, in ſpite of your Heart, change the Subject of the Propoſition, and make your *ſame Thing*, quite *different Things*; and your One Perſon, Two *different Perſons*; infinitely more different than *Michael* the Archangel, and St. *Paul*. But I ſhall now ſuppoſe that you had made all this clear and intelligible; how Two Intelligent Natures may poſſibly be united in One Perſon, without either confounding the Natures, or dividing the Perſon: yet even upon this Supposition,

position, I say, you cannot, upon your own Principles, have any Notion or Idea of the *Humiliation* of *Christ*, or of any possible Satisfaction or Atonement he could make for Sin, but what a *Socinian* may allow. For call it a Personal Union, or what you will, you cannot but grant, that whatever is created must be essentially different from *God*; and the Human Nature, or the Man Christ being a Creature, no Talk of Union or Personal Identity can help you, or in the least alter the Case, while the Distance and Difference are confessedly as equally and infinitely great, as if there was no such Union at all. For nothing can be conceived under a greater and more essential Difference, than the Son of God, and the Son of Man, as they must stand in your Scheme. Now to comply with the Necessity of your Hypothesis, I shall endeavour, for a little while, to talk without Ideas, and suppose the Infinite, Eternal, Uncreated *Logos*, to be the same *Person* with a Created *Human Soul* and *Body*; or, to speak still more unintelligibly, with the *Humane Nature*, i. e. with Man in *general*, but no Man in *particular*. Well, but let this be supposed to contain some Truth in it, in some Sense or other; and what then will be the Consequence? Why, that the Sufferings of the Human Soul, or Human Nature, will acquire an infinite Worth and Value, from the personal Union of the *Logos*. For by reason of the personal Union, what is done or suffered in One *Nature only*, may be attributed to the *whole Person*. By *Person* here, must be meant *both Natures*, which by their Union constitute the Person; and therefore to say, that what is done

done or ſuffered in *One Nature only*, is attributed to the *whole Perſon*, is the ſame Thing with ſaying, that what is done or ſuffered in one *Nature only*, is by a falſe Attribution ſuppoſed to be done or ſuffered in *both Natures*. For what is the *whole Perſon*, but *both Natures* united? And indeed, the Real, Vital Union of both Natures, and the mutual Communication of Joys and Sufferings, which is the only Principle that can raiſe the Dignity and Value of the Human Sacrifice, is here plainly ſuppoſed and aſſerted, at the ſame Time that it muſt neceſſarily be deny'd, as inconſiſtent with the Hypotheſis. But ſince the *Logos* is here ſuppoſed to be uncapable of ſuffering by any Loſs or Pain ſuſtained by the Human Nature, what is ſuffer'd in the Human Nature only, cannot be attributed to both *Natures*, or to the *Perſon*, without a manifeſt Abſurdity, and Self-contradiction. The *whole Perſon* cannot be ſaid to loſe or ſuffer, unleſs the Loſs and Suffering be in both Natures; for the human Nature only, is not the Perſon. While there is a real vital Union, for Inſtance, between the Soul and Body, and a conſequent mutual Communication, ſo that they muſt neceſſarily enjoy, or ſuffer together; the Sufferings of either, will be the Sufferings of the whole Man: In which Caſe, the Sufferings, if they are freely undertaken, will be eſtimated and valued, in Proportion to the Innocence and Dignity of the Soul, the nobleſt Part of the Man. But if we ſuppoſe the Soul and Body to be ſo united, or rather diſunited, as to deſtroy this vital Union and mutual Communication of Joys and Sufferings; the bare *Sufferings* of the Body, ſhould

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we ſuppoſe it capable of ſuffering without a real vital Communication with the Soul, could not at all be raiſed by the Dignity of the Soul: 'Tis plainly the Dignity of the Sufferer, that muſt raiſe the Value of the Sufferings; and therefore, where the Sufferer is only a *Human Soul*, or *Human Nature*, the bare Name or Sound of Union with the *Logos*, can add no real Weight or Worth to the Sufferings.

This Hypotheſis then, that is ſo much cried up, and, as it were, adored, on Account of an infinite Satisfaction and Atonement, in Truth and Reality affords no Satisfaction at all, beyond the Capacity and Value of *Human Nature*, or a Human Soul and Body. It will be ſtill urged, perhaps, that where Two Natures make one Compound, the Properties and Affections of each may certainly be affirmed of the Whole; and that this is juſtified by the general Conſent of Mankind, and the common Uſe of Language, while the mere Properties and Affections of the Body, as Weight, Stature, Complexion, *&c.* are affirmed of the Man: but this is only by a uſual Figure of Speech, where a Part is put for the whole, or the contrary; and in all ſuch Inſtances, the *Man* can only ſignify the Man's *Body*; for ſhould we take Man here properly for Soul and Body too, of which the Man really conſiſts, ſuch Predications could not poſſibly be true.

'Tis wonderful, how far this groſs and palpable Fallacy has prevail'd, and how apt Men are to catch at a figurative, improper Expreſſion, in a looſe and popular Way of Speaking, as if it was ſtrictly true in Argument, and agreeable to the Nature of Things. Nothing is more

more frequent in a common Way of Speaking, than this Sort of Metonymy, where the Name of the Whole is put for a Part only, or the Name of a Part for the Whole. But in Argument, and Strictneſs of Speech, we ought to take care not to loſe the proper Subject of the Predication, by affirming that of the Whole, which is true only of a Part. 'Tis evident, that where any *Whole* under a common Name, is made up of Two different and diſtinct *Subjects*, with their peculiar and different Porperties; the Properties of each cannot be affirmed of the *Whole*, *i. e.* of both Subjects. In all ſuch Predications, if *true*, there muſt neceſſarily be conſidered a real Communication, or Community of the ſame Kind of Properties in both Subjects; which being here contrary to the Suppoſition, ſuch an Affirmation is plainly a Self-contradiction. In your Hypotheſis, there muſt be an infinite and eſſential Difference betwixt the *Logos*, and the Human Soul of our Saviour; ſo that there cannot poſſibly be ſuppos'd any real Communication, or Community of Properties; they will have nothing in common, but every Thing, both Subſtance and Properties, eſſentially and infinitely different. And therefore, if you ſuppoſe the Name *Jeſus Chriſt*, affix'd to the whole Perſon or Compound, conſiſting of the *Logos* in Union with a Human Soul and Body, there is not One Propoſition in Scripture concerning *Chriſt*, but what muſt be neceſſarily falſe. In this Hypotheſis, it will not be true, that *Chriſt* ſuffered and died for our Sins; becauſe this is true *only* of the Human Nature: But the Human Nature *only* is not *Chriſt*. Again; it will not be true, that

Chriſt is God, that he is the Only-begotten of the Father; that he was ſent from the Father, and that he took Fleſh, to be made an Offering for Sin: This, I ſay, in your Hypotheſis, cannot be one Word of it true; becauſe all this is true only of the *Logos*, or Divine Nature; but the *Logos*, or Divine Nature *only*, is not Chriſt. 'Tis evident, that this Way of Talking, ſuppoſes *Chriſt* or the *Perſon* to be ſome *Tertium Quid*, ſome common Subject, in which both Natures ſubſiſt as Properties or Attributes. But what is that *Tertium Quid*, or common Subject, but the Sum or Aggregate of both Natures united? And therefore, to affirm the Properties of *each* Nature of the *Perſon*, is the ſame Thing with affirming the Properties of *each* Nature of *both* Natures; or ſaying, that every thing that is true of *One*, is true of *Both*: which yet is contrary to the Hypotheſis. And from hence again appears the Neceſſity you are under, of ſilently changing the Subject of the Propoſition, as often as you join the Properties of each Nature diſtinctly, under One Perſonal Name. Thus when you ſay, *Chriſt* is God, and *Chriſt* is Man; becauſe you retain the ſame perſonal Sound in both Propoſitions, the Reader has his Eyes dazzled, and thinks you mean ſtill the *ſame Perſon*, by the ſame perſonal Name, *Chriſt*: Whereas in your Hypotheſis, you muſt unavoidably mean two eſſentially diſtinct, and infinitely different *Perſons*. But here I muſt deſire you to obſerve, that whenever I ſay, *This* or *that* muſt neceſſarily be ſo, or that ſuch or ſuch a Thing is falſe, impoſſible, or contradictory; I mean only with Reſpect to *common Senſe*. And therefore, all that

I pretend to prove, is, That *your Senſe*, whatever it be, cannot poſſibly be *common Senſe*. But I would not be thought hereby to ſuppoſe, or intimate, that you have *no Senſe* at all; or that what you ſay, is not in your own Senſe true. Doubtleſs you have ſome Meaning or other; ſome ſecret *reſerv'd Senſe*, *which*, when you ſhall pleaſe to ſpeak *out*, perhaps it may appear, that you and I are of one and the *ſame Mind*; and that we are contending all this while about *Words only*. However, if this be ſo, the Fault is none of mine. I ſpeak *freely*, and endeavour to ſpeak *plainly*; and 'till you will do the like, if there ſhould happen to be any Miſunderſtanding betwixt us, the Blame muſt lie at your Door. Upon the whole, I cannot but think, that without ſome other ſort of Defence, and ſome clearer Account of Things, than have hitherto appeared on the *Athanaſian* Side; the World muſt ſoon begin to ſuſpect that you are but in *Jeſt*, and that you write only to *betray* the Cauſe you would ſeem to eſpouſe. This, doubtleſs, you will receive as a very hard Saying, and be ready to cry, *Who can* bear it? And I hope, Sir, you *will not* bear it, without anſwering the true Deſign of it; by telling us plainly, whether Chriſtianity be an *Intelligible Thing*, and whether it is *indeed* conſiſtent with *Common Senſe*, or not.

I am, SIR,

Your Humble Servant, &c.

I pretend to prove, Sir, That you don't, whatever it be, cannot possibly be common Sense. But I would not be thinking merely to suppose, or intimate, that you have no Sense at all; or that what you say, is not in your own Sense true. Doubtless you have some Meaning or other; some secret Sense, which, when you shall please to speak out, perhaps it may appear, that you and I are of one and the same Mind; and that we are contending all this while about Words only. However, if this be so, the Fault is none of mine. I speak plain, and endeavour to speak plainly; and till you will do the like, if there should happen to be any Misunderstanding between us, the Blame must lie at your Door. Upon the whole, I cannot but think, that without some other sort of Evidence, and some clearer Account of Things, than have hitherto appeared on the Arian Side; the World must be in a Delign to suspect that you are but in Jest, and that you write only to please the Cause you would seem to espouse. But, doubtless, you will receive as a very high Favour, and be ready to say, That's can bear it. And I hope, Sir, you will not bear it, without answering the true Design of it; by setting the plainly, whether Christianity be an intelligible Thing, and whether it is indeed consistent with Common Sense, or not.

I am, &c.

I. R.

Enthuſiaſm in Diſtreſs:

OR, AN

EXAMINATION

OF THE

Reflections upon Reaſon.

IN A

LETTER

TO

Phileleutherus Britannicus.



AN EXAMINATION OF THE *Reflections upon Reaſon.*

SIR,



THE different Opinions and Parties into which Mankind are divided about Matters of Religion, having determined you to attempt the uniting and reconciling them in one Scheme of ſpeculative Belief, and under one Form of Church-Government; as I could not but look upon ſuch an Undertaking to be very extraordinary, and what no wiſe Man would venture at, without ſome ſuitable and very uncommon

common Abilities; I thought my ſelf concern'd to examine the Plan you have laid down, and to weigh and conſider it in all its Parts, in order to diſcover what mutual Relation, Connection, or Dependance, there might be betwixt the ſeveral Springs and Movements of this new Contrivance. The Reſult of which is, that *your Hypotheſis*, like all the *reſt* which have been hitherto coin'd for the ſame Purpoſe, appears to me to be altogether precarious and inſufficient; neither conſiſtent with itſelf, nor in any wiſe adjuſted or accommodated to the End you propoſe. The ſettling all Points of Difference in ſpeculative Belief, and the deciding all Controverſies relating to the different Modes, Rights, and Forms of Diſcipline, and external Worſhip, is beyond all Diſpute a Matter of great Difficulty; and therefore, if any one ſhould think it poſſible and neceſſary, he ought to go about it with a very nice and diſtinguiſhing Hand, and proceed in a Buſineſs of ſuch Importance with great Judgment and Caution. If ſuch a Decider does not pretend to *Infallibility*, he ought at leaſt, as a *Reconciler*, to make it appear that he is ſtrictly juſt and impartial; that he is himſelf ſufficiently free from any thing of that Prejudice, Paſſion, and Party-Zeal, which he complains of in others; and that he has nothing in View, but the Glory of God, the Advancement of true Religion, and the Happineſs of Mankind. But if, among the ſeveral Sects and Factions into which the Chriſtian World is divided, a flaming Zealot ſhould ſtand up, in the Name and Spirit of a *Party*, bidding an open Defiance to all the *reſt*, and declaring that he can admit of no Terms

but an abſolute Compliance, nor maintain any Peace or Communion with thoſe, who are ſo ignorant and ſenſeleſs, or ſo wicked and preſumptuous, as to differ from him in Matters of ſpeculative Belief, ritual Worſhip, or Church-Governmeht; it is plain, that by ſuch a Method, a Man muſt put himſelf out of all Capacity of doing the leaſt Service, either to Religion in general, or to his own Cauſe in particular; ſince he thereby only enables his Adverſaries to engage him with the greater Advantage, and has nothing to expect from them but Pity or Contempt. This is a Method, which I may preſume to ſay never made one Proſelyte, or ever convinced any unprejudiced Perſon, that the Man who thus contends for Religion, either underſtands it right, or appears to be in earneſt about it. He may be in good earneſt perhaps for the diſtinguiſhing Tenets and Criteria of a Party; but Catholick Chriſtianity and True Religion are quite another Thing.

You begin with an Obſervation and Complaint of the great and popular Abuſe of the Word *Reaſon*. "The Confuſion introduced "into our Language by the Abuſe of Words, "which have through Length of Time been "perverted from their natural and primitive "Signification, has been learnedly obſerved and "ſincerely lamented by a Right Reverend Pre-"late of our Church. I have often wiſhed "that the ſame judicious Hand, that has en-"deavoured, with uncommon Zeal, to reſcue "ſome Words from this lamentable Abuſe, "ſuch as *Church*, *Religion*, &c. would have al-"ſo ſhewed ſome Regard to that much per-"verted and abuſed Word *Reaſon*; the Abuſe

"of

" of which has been as fatal to Mankind, as " prejudicial to the publick Peace and the In- " tereſts of Truth, as thoſe others which he " has ſo elaborately endeavoured to explain. " Not to mention that his Lordſhip would " hereby have wonderfully obliged ſeveral of " his Admirers, *pretty Gentlemen*, who have " heartily abjured Prieſtcraft, Bigottry, and " ſlaviſh Submiſſion to Authority, and boldly " and reſolutely aſſert the Dignity of human " Reaſon; yet, for want of a right under- " ſtanding of the Word, have been forced to " defend it, in a moſt unreaſonable Manner, " with Nonſenſe and Abſurdity. In ſhort, " there is ſcarce a Word in the *Engliſh* Tongue, " of a more general, uncertain, indeterminate " Signification. Every wrong-headed Mortal " calls his Miſunderſtanding his Reaſon; every " Man's different Way of apprehending or miſ- " apprehending Things, is Reaſon. So that " there is no Opinion ſo abſurd, no Notion ſo " ſilly, no Poſition ſo monſtrous, but is de- " fended and juſtified by Reaſon.——But " if every Man ſhall call his particular Way of " Thinking and Judging by that oracular " Name, he will make it the moſt uncertain " fallacious Thing in the World; for it muſt " be as various as the different Complections, " Educations, Tempers, and almoſt Features of " thoſe who pretend to it." *p.* 3, 4, 5. Here you take it for granted, as a very *plain Caſe*, that there as many different Senſes and Acceptations of the Word *Reaſon* among Men, as there are different and contrary Opinions in the World; which is a Conceit ſo very peculiar, and ſo odd, that I imagine the intelligent Reader will hard-

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ly forbear laughing. The Matter of Fact is plainly this; that every Man does, and muſt ſuppoſe his own Opinion, whatever it be, to be true and reaſonable, ſince this is eſſential to all Belief, as ſuch; and no Man can believe any Thing at all, without believing it to be true, or agreeable to the real Exiſtence and natural Relations of Things. Methinks therefore it is very hard, and looks a little ſpightful and ill-natured, that you can allow none but your ſelf, and your own Party, to ſuppoſe their own Opinions to be true and reaſonable. For this is really the mighty Grievance, the Evil which ſo deeply affects you; the different Opinions and Parties into which Men are divided about Matters of Religion, is what you cannot bear with any Patience; and therefore you would fain contrive a Method to bring them all into your own Scheme and Party, and thereby deliver them from the odious Characters of *pretty Gentlemen*, *minute Philoſophers*, *Scribblers*, and *wrong-headed Mortals*. But if you could accompliſh this notable Deſign, and make them all of your Mind, perhaps they might not be one Hair's Breadth the nearer to Truth and Reaſon in the Nature of Things; ſince I doubt but not to make it appear that you, *Sir*, in this very Book, have as much miſtaken and perverted the right Uſe of *Reaſon*, both in *Name* and *Thing*, as any *pretty Gentleman* or *minute Philoſopher* in the World. It is viſible that Men's Diſputes and different Opinions in religious Matters muſt remain the ſame, tho' they ſhould be all agreed, as they really are, concerning the general abſtract Nature, Definitions, and different Acceptations of the Words *Truth* and *Reaſon*. A *Scotch* Presbyterian,

terian, an *Engliſh* Prelatiſt, and a *Roman* Catholick, would all readily agree in the general Signification, and various Acceptations of the Word *Reaſon*; and yet the Queſtion would ſtill remain betwixt them, which Religion is the true, or moſt agreeable to the Will of God, and the Nature of Things. If a Queſtion ſhould ariſe concerning a certain Parcel of Matter, whether it be pure uncorrupted Gold or not; 'tis plain that Men might be of different Opinions about it, as their different Methods of Trial and Proofs ſhould be more or leſs accurate. One perhaps might conclude it to be pure unmix'd Gold; another that there is a certain ſmall Mixture of Copper in it; and a Third that there is no Copper at all, but a conſiderable Proportion of Lead, or Iron. Now ſhould any one adviſe them, in order to a clear deciſive Determination of the Caſe, to ſettle the preciſe Meaning of the Words *Gold*, *Copper*, *Lead*, and *Iron*, ſuch a Propoſal might poſſibly give them ſome Diverſion, but would afford no Light towards ending the Diſpute. They would tell the Adviſer, that they have no Diſpute about the Meaning of thoſe Words; that their Controverſy is real; and therefore if he can help them to any more certain or ſatisfactory Method of Proof, they are ready to thank him, but otherwiſe he might as well ſpare his Pains. Thus, ſuppoſe a Company divided upon the Queſtion, whether a certain Perſon they are looking at be the Prince or not; ſeveral perſonal Marks and Characteriſticks are brought on both Sides, ſome of which ſeem to agree, and others to diſagree, ſo that they can come to no common ſatisfactory Reſolution. But here a grave Rea-

Reaſoner ſteps in, and tells them, Gentlemen, before you diſpute farther about this Matter, you ought to ſettle and aſcertain the clear determinate Signification of the Word *Prince*; what you mean by *Prince* in its general abſtract Nature; what by *a Prince*, and what by *the Prince*; and when you have once ſettled this grand Point, you will eaſily come to a Reſolution, whether the Perſon you diſpute about, be really *the Prince* or not. Muſt not this Formality look ridiculous? They would be doubtleſs ready to reply, Sir, we have no Controverſy about the general abſtract Nature of *a Prince*; and we all mean the ſame Thing, the ſame Perſon, by *the Prince*. If therefore you can help us to any more certain Marks or Characteriſticks of *the Prince*, whereby to determine the Queſtion to the Satisfaction of thoſe who doubt whether this Perſon be the Prince or no, we ſhall reckon our ſelves obliged; but the Method you propoſe can be of no Service to us at all. This, Sir, is the Caſe here; you have taken Pains to ſettle the Meaning and different Acceptation of the Word *Reaſon*, without being able to ſhew that any one Point of difference now in Debate depends upon it. Mankind are divided into different Opinions and Parties about Religion, and the Difficulty is how to unite and reconcile them; to which Purpoſe you think it of great Importance, to ſettle the proper and genuine Signification of the Word *Reaſon*; and you tell us, that Reaſon ſtands, either, Firſt and principally, for the eternal immutable Relations, Habitudes, and Analogies of Things; or Secondly, for the Underſtanding or reaſoning Faculty it ſelf; or Thirdly, for the Act of Reaſoning;

or

or lastly, for the rational objective Proof, or the intermediate Ideas, made use of in order to discover the Relation and Connection of any Two remote Ideas. These are the different Acceptations of the Word *Reason*; and you think, if the pretty Gentlemen and minute Philosophers did but consider this, they would not trifle, and talk Nonsense, as they do.

'Tis Pity methinks you had not condescended to have given us some particular Instances, wherein the settling the Sense and different Acceptation of the Word *Reason*, could in the least tend to clear up any Question or Controversy now on Foot. But this must have utterly spoil'd a fine Harangue, and quite effaced and rubb'd off all the Colourings from a seeming Piece of Wit.

'Tis of the greatest Consequence to settle the clear determinate Sense and Meaning of the Words, upon which a particular Controversy chiefly depends, since otherwise no Debate whatever can be brought to any Issue. And therefore the Right Reverend Prelate you here aim at, had great Reason to fix and ascertain the Sense of the Words *Church*, *Religion*, *Authority*, *&c.* about which he was disputing. And this his Lordship has done so effectually, and with such Success, that his Adversaries have nothing to say, but by keeping up a mere verbal Strife, and insisting upon a different Sense of the Words, from his Lordship's plain declared Sense; and this too in direct Opposition to the Nature and Reason of the Things themselves. If you will call any external Rites and Forms of Worship, of mere human Institution, by the Name of *Religion*; 'tis plain that by *Religion* you

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can only mean ſome *outward Practice*, as abſtracted from that *inward Sincerity*, to which human Cognizance and Juriſdiction cannot poſſibly extend, and yet without which there can be no ſuch Thing as *Religion* at all.

You might in the ſame Way of Trifling, while your Hand was ſo happily in, have obliged the World farther, by ſettling the clear determinate Senſe and different Acceptations of the Word *Scripture*. In your Way of Talking, *There is ſcarce a Word in the* Engliſh *Tongue of a more general, looſe, and indeterminate Signification. Every wrong-headed Mortal calls his Miſunderſtanding by the Name of* Scripture; *every Man's different Way of apprehending, or miſapprehending Things is* Scripture. *So that there is no Opinion ſo abſurd, no Notion ſo ſilly, no Poſition ſo monſtrous, but is defended and juſtified by* Scripture. Methinks therefore no Word in the *Engliſh* Tongue could have more needed an Explication from ſo great a Maſter, than the Word *Scripture*; eſpecially when you tell us, there are Articles of Faith to be built upon it, which are abſolutely unintelligible, and above and beyond all human Reaſon and Comprehenſion. This I think, even in your own Account, muſt be allow'd to be as great a Defect in your Performance, as any thing you complain of, that his Lordſhip had omitted. And therefore, how averſe ſoever you might otherwiſe be to the granting of ſuch a Favour, I hope you will forgive his Lordſhip, if not in Point of *Juſtice*, at leaſt for your *own Sake*.

I intirely agree with you, that Chriſtianity in its whole Frame and Conſtitution, with Regard both to its Doctrines and Duties, Theory

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and Practice, is highly reasonable; exactly conformable to the Nature and Attributes of God, and most effectually conducive to the true Happiness and moral Perfection of Mankind. But yet I must freely declare, that I cannot think the Method you have taken with the *Deists*, and *Free-Thinkers*, is likely to have much Effect towards their Conviction. For as Justice is due even to the Devil himself, I must here put you in Mind of one Thing, that I take to be a fundamental Error in your Way of Reasoning with them, and which I fear will hinder, in great Measure, the good Effect your Discourse might otherwise have had upon them; and that is, the visible Partiality you all along discover, in charging their Lusts and Vices as the Consequence of their Principles. 'Tis most evident in Fact, that any Scheme of speculative Belief whatever, one as well as another, may consist and stand together with a wicked and profligate Life. The Vicious and Immoral among all Parties, and there are but too many such, find some Way or other to elude their own Principles, in order to make way for their sinful Pursuits, and the Gratification of their Lusts and Passions.

You are very angry with those who make so free in their Declamations upon the Lusts and Vices of your own Clergy; and you would think it very unreasonable to have their Practice, in this respect, charged upon their Principles, or assigned as the Reason why they cannot be convinced of the Absurdity and Presumption of the Claims they lay to certain Powers and Prerogatives, which cannot belong to them; and yet a *Deist* or *Free-thinker* might easily

eaſily make even with you upon this Score, if you could be content to be repaid in your own Coin, and take *Railing* for *Reaſoning*.

But when you vouchſafe to argue with any Sort of Men, you muſt ſuppoſe them convincible, for otherwiſe you would not throw away your Time and Pains about them. If a *Deiſt* be under the abſolute Power and Influence of his Luſts and Paſſions, and reſolved not to conſider or examine any Thing that might take him off from, or diſturb him in, his ſinful Purſuits; 'tis plain that he muſt be uncapable of Conviction, and it would be to no Purpoſe to offer Reaſons and Arguments againſt him: and the Caſe will be the ſame, if you apply it to a *Quaker*, a *Presbyterian*, a Church of *England* Man, or a *Papiſt*. In Point of Prejudice, Luſt, and Paſſion, therefore, (which are undoubtedly the great Obſtacles to a more free and impartial Enquiry after Truth) you ought in all Reaſon to place your own Party upon a Level with others; and if you will not admit of this, you may ſtand the Ridicule of *Deiſts* and *Free-thinkers* as well as you can, and return Railing for Railing at leaſt, if you cannot return Wit for Wit; but every impartial By-ſtander, I ſuppoſe, muſt look upon this as a Scuffle of very little Conſequence. A *Deiſt*, if he be really ſuch, muſt, upon his own Principles, think himſelf obliged to practice all the Duties, and ſubmit to the ſeveral Obligations, of natural Religion; and this would be a fair Step, and great Advance, towards Chriſtianity. You allow, that Chriſtianity is nothing elſe but natural Religion, enforced upon ſtronger and more powerful Motives, and directed to higher and

nobler Ends; and conſequently, you muſt, I preſume, allow that Deiſm is a very good and ſufficient Preparative to Chriſtianity. Let us ſuppoſe then, a ſincere *Deiſt*, one who both underſtands and practices the Principles of natural Religion; let ſuch an one, I ſay, come to you for farther Advice and Inſtructions, declaring, that he is readily diſpoſed to embrace the Chriſtian Religion, upon ſufficient Evidence of its Truth and Reaſonableneſs. Now this being the Caſe, you cannot, I think, juſtly reject him; and no Doubt you would conduct him in a ſcientifick Way, from Definitions, Axioms, and *Præcognita*, to the more remote, implicate, and difficult Concluſions.

I could wiſh you had obliged us with a more ſuccinct Account of your Method of teaching this Science; but ſince you have not thought fit to be very particular, we muſt be content with ſuch Hints as you have given us. The firſt Principle then that you lay down as the Foundation of the Chriſtian *Faith*, is this, That there are certain unintelligible Doctrines in the Chriſtian Syſtem, which being abſolutely above and beyond all human Reaſon and Comprehenſion, we are yet required to believe as neceſſary to Salvation. Your Words are theſe, *p.* 33. "But the greateſt Difficulty is ſtill be-
"hind; and that is, the Myſteries of the Go-
"ſpel; certain unintelligible Doctrines, im-
"poſed upon us as Articles of Faith, which
"no mortal Man can explain or compre-
"hend; and yet we are told, that theſe are
"neceſſary to be believed in order to Salva-
"tion; which ſeems very abſurd and unreaſon-
"able. And here I muſt premiſe a very ne-

"ceſſary

" ceſſary Diſtinction, tho' very much exploded
" by ſome *little Scribblers*, betwixt being *above*
" *our Reaſon*, and *contrary to it*. The Shortneſs
" and Weakneſs of our Underſtandings can-
" not comprehend or explain many Things,
" that are ſenſibly and demonſtrably certain;
" but no Man ſure will be ſo weak as to diſ-
" believe his Senſes, and deny the Certainty
" of ſeveral Effects in Nature, becauſe he can-
" not explain their ſeveral Cauſes, nor the
" exact Method, Reaſon, and Manner of
" their Production. Let this be granted, and
" then let us ſee whether our Patrons of Rea-
" ſon muſt not diſdain their Senſes as well
" as their Faith. If they reſolve to believe no-
" thing of which they have not adequate
" Ideas; the neceſſary Modes and Relations
" of which they cannot explain, what adequate
" Idea have theſe Gentlemen of Matter? What
" is the Eſſence of it? They tell you, it is an
" extended impenetrable Subſtance, having
" Parts without Parts. Well, but all this
" while we apprehend nothing by this Defini-
" tion, but a Congeries of Accidents and Qua-
" lities; ſuch as Extention, Impenetrability,
" *&c.* But what is the Subject, the *Subſtratum*
" of theſe Accidents? What is the Subject to
" which theſe Predicates belong? What is the
" naked Eſſence of Matter, ſtript of all its Ac-
" cidents; which, though inſeparable in Fact,
" may, one would think, be diſtinguiſhed in
" the Underſtanding? And one would be apt
" to imagine, that any Idea ſhort of this were
" inadequate and imperfect. But does any one
" doubt of its Exiſtence? Do we not diſcourſe,
" reaſon and judge about it? And, in ſhort,

" our Notions of Spirit, are as obſcure and " inadequate as thoſe of Matter; about which, " however, we argue and draw Conſequences, " with as much Certainty, as from any other " Subject or Matter of Science". Here we have your main Principle upon which the Chriſtian Faith is to be built, together with your Evidence for it; and you cannot complain that I have not quoted you fairly.

I muſt own my ſelf to be one of thoſe *Scribblers*, who have thrown off this Diſtinction, as it is commonly underſtood and apply'd, or rather as I think miſunderſtood and abuſed. But I did not do this without aſſigning my Reaſons for it, and ſuch as have never yet been anſwered; and when any Man, how great a Maſter ſoever he may be, in arguing for a Point, ſuppreſſes any material Evidence againſt it, he does but betray and expoſe, inſtead of defending his Cauſe. You ought to have cleared the Ground of your Diſtinction, betwixt Things *above Reaſon*, and *contrary to it*; and have made it appear that the *rational Belief*, or *Aſſent of the Mind*, might in any Inſtance be carried beyond the *Perception* of the *Underſtanding*. But inſtead of this, you only raiſe a Miſt about the naked Eſſences, and unknown Cauſes of Things. And in theſe Matters you pretend to exerciſe a Faith that is *above Reaſon*, or to *believe* beyond what you *perceive*; nay, that you can reaſon clearly, and draw the moſt certain and undoubted Conſequences from Things of which you have no Knowledge, Idea, or *Perception*. I muſt own, that this is very ſurpriſing; and if you can clear up this Method of Belief and Reaſoning, I ſhall look upon you to be one of

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the greateſt and moſt extraordinary Divines and Philoſophers, that has ever yet appeared in the World. You ask thoſe whom you call *Patrons of Reaſon*, What is the ſimple naked Eſſence of Matter, as abſtracted from all its Attributes and ſenſible Qualities? To which I readily anſwer, that I cannot tell, I know not what it is, it comes not within the Province of my Underſtanding. But before you are too haſty in drawing any Conſequence from this Conceſſion, you muſt give me leave in my Turn to ask you, What you *believe* the real Eſſence of Matter to be? My Underſtanding cannot reach it, but it ſeems your *Faith* can. What then is the naked Eſſence of Matter, according to your *Belief* of it? Your Anſwer to this will determine the Point, whether the real Eſſence of Matter be not ſomething as much above and beyond *your Faith*, as it is above and beyond *my Underſtanding*. And if this ſhould be ſo, I cannot ſee what Ground you have gain'd as a *Patron of Faith*. Perhaps you will ſay, that tho' you know not wherein the real Eſſence of Matter conſiſts, yet you believe Matter is ſomething really exiſting; and herein my Underſtanding goes as far as your Faith. That there is Something really exiſting without you, which you call Matter, and which is ſome Way or other the Cauſe or Occaſion of certain Ideas and Senſations excited in your Mind, is evident in Fact, and as certain as Senſe it ſelf can make it; and therefore this is what you know and perceive, as well as believe: But wherein that Something conſiſts as to its abſolute real Eſſence, or what it is by which thoſe Senſations are excited in your Mind, can be no more a Matter of

Faith, than it is of Perception or Knowledge. If you ſhould receive a Blow in the dark, you would certainly conclude that Something ſtrikes you, tho' perhaps you know not what; for while you feel and are ſenſible of the Blow, you muſt needs perceive and aſſent to the Truth of this ſelf-evident Propoſition, that ſuch an Effect cannot proceed from no Cauſe at all. Now you might call this unknown Cauſe, *Matter*; yet ſtill that bare *Name*, while it is ſuppoſed to ſtand for Something unknown, can add no more to your *Faith*, than it does to your *Underſtanding*; and you can reaſonably *believe* no more than you *know* or *perceive* concerning it. It reſts upon you here, to give ſome particular and clear Inſtance of any one ſingle Propoſition, which you believe, or aſſent to, without underſtanding the Signification of the Terms, or without having any ſettled determined Ideas of the Thing believed; which if you are not able to do, it muſt be ſtill evident that your *Faith*, or *rational Aſſent*, cannot advance one Hair's Breadth beyond your Ideas, or the Perception of your Underſtanding. But in your Account, one may not only believe what is unintelligible, incomprehenſible, and above Reaſon; but likewiſe diſcourſe and argue upon it, and draw the moſt certain and undoubted Conſequences from it. So that here is not only *Faith* above *Reaſon*, but even *Reaſon* above *Reaſon*, Knowledge above and beyond all our Ideas and Perceptions, and a Science without rational Evidence: For you tell us, that tho' we know nothing of the Subſtance, *Subſtratum*, or real Eſſence of Things; yet we argue about it, and draw Conſequences from it, with as much

much Clearneſs and Certainty, as from any *other* Subject or *Matter of Science*. But this is certainly a very great *Miſtake*; and if it had not been made by a Gentleman, who is ſo much advanced above the *Scribblers* and *minute Philoſophers*, I ſhould have call'd it a very great *Blunder*. How any Thing, of which we have no Idea or Perception at all, ſhould be a *Matter of Science*, is very hard to conceive; and will not, I preſume, be well underſtood without ſome farther Explication. 'Tis Pity, methinks, you had not condeſcended to have given us ſome particular Inſtances, in which we are ſuppoſed to argue about, and draw Conſequences from, the naked abſtract Eſſences of Things, as they exiſt abſolutely and in their own Nature, or *extra Mentem*: But 'tis ſufficient, it ſeems, to ſuppoſe or take the Thing for granted, and to ask, whether thoſe who deny it, muſt not diſdain their *Senſes as well as their Faith?* But without diſdaining either *Faith*, or *Senſe*, I dare undertake to prove, that your Method of Reaſoning is impoſſible, and contrary to Reaſon. That we have no Idea of Matter, abſtracted from all its Attributes and ſenſible Qualities, *i. e.* from all the Ideas we have of it, is very ſure; nor is it eaſy to conceive how we ſhould; but then I ſay, that 'tis impoſſible to argue and reaſon about it, impoſſible to draw any Conſequences from it, farther than our Ideas go. The Act of Reaſoning, in its very Nature and Definition, conſiſts, in aranging our Ideas ſo, as to diſcover the Relation and Connection of any two remote Ideas, by a right Order and Diſpoſition of other intermediate Ideas; but ſince we have no Idea at all of pure Eſſence, Subſtance,

or *Subſtratum*, as ſubſtracted from all its Attributes and Properties; 'tis evident, that this Idea which we have not, cannot come into the Account of our Diſcourſes and Reaſonings. A Man indeed may talk Nonſenſe, as well as believe Nonſenſe, and he may call the one *Faith*, and the other *Reaſon*; but his real *Faith*, as well as his Knowledge and Reaſon if he has any, muſt be confined to his Ideas; and if this will not content him, he may trifle and ramble, he may loſe his Way, and wander in the dark, but he can never argue, reaſon, or clear up the Truth. From hence I think it is plain, that in your Way, that *Faith* which is *above Reaſon*, will be likewiſe *contrary to Reaſon*; and conſequently, that your ſeeming Diſtinction is really no Diſtinction at all, but muſt bring the Matter to this, that we are bound under the Penalty of eternal Damnation, *to believe Things contrary to Reaſon.*

Having laid this ſolid Foundation, you proceed with your Account of the Chriſtian Myſterics, *p.* 31. "The firſt and great Myſtery, "which is at preſent the Stumbling-Block "of our rational Men, is that of the holy un- "divided Trinity; Three co-eſſential co-eter- "nal Perſons, ſubſiſting in the ſame Eſſence. "This, they ſay, is a Contradiction, that *One* "ſhould be *Three*, and *Three* ſhould be *One*. "And ſo it would indeed, if they ſhould be "the ſame in the ſame Reſpect; but what the "Holy Scripture *aſſerts*, is, that they are *Three* "*in Perſon*, and but *One in Eſſence*".

You are always wonderful happy in the clearing of Difficulties; and if you can make good what you here ſay, you will have decided this Con-

Controverſy at once, and we ſhall all from henceforth agree at leaſt in Words, whether we mean the ſame Thing or not. But I fear, *Sir*, that your Zeal has in this Caſe been prejudicial to your Memory. Where, I beſeech you, does the Holy Scripture *aſſert* this, that they are *Three* in *Perſon*, and but *One* in *Eſſence*? Others indeed before you have pretended to draw this as a *Conſequence*, and have accordingly ſet it up as their own Inference and Deduction from Scripture; but that it ſhould be Scripture it ſelf, or a *Scripture Aſſertion*, was never I ſuppoſe known or heard of till now. If you have found out any *ſuch Aſſertion*, in any hitherto unknown Copy or Manuſcript of the New Teſtament, I hope you will not long conceal ſo very material and remarkable a Diſcovery; but if you can produce no ſuch Evidence, I think you have here diſcovered ſomething, that you had much better have concealed. One would think that Self-Exiſtence and originate Exiſtence, Begotten and Unbegotten, ſhould be an eſſential Difference, and that the ſame numerical Eſſence cannot be originate and unoriginate, ſelf-exiſtent and derived; but this you will allow to be *above* Reaſon, and therefore perhaps it may be as impoſſible, as if it were *contrary* to Reaſon. You go on to inſtance in the Myſtery of the Incarnation, *&c.* But ſince you have neither ſufficiently explain'd your ſelf, nor offered any Thing in Confirmation of your own Opinion, and have taken Care not to leave your ſelf accountable for any one Propoſition of a clear determinate Meaning, I ſhall diſmiſs this Subject, and not drag you into the Controverſy againſt your Will.

I ſhall now proceed to examine, and make ſome Remarks upon, the Method you propoſe, in order to unite and reconcile the ſeveral Sects and Parties among Chriſtians, in one Scheme of Belief, under one Form and Model of external Worſhip, and Church-Government. Now here you grant, *p.* 50. what you ſuppoſe all to be agreed in, that the *Scripture* is a plain intelligible Rule of Faith and Practice. You obſerve very well, *That if it be not intelligible, it cannot anſwer the Ends for which it was given; for that no Man can be taught, reproved, corrected, or inſtructed, by what he does not or cannot underſtand. And that it is inconſiſtent, either with the Wiſdom or Goodneſs of God, to give us a Revelation to be a Guide to Truth, and a Rule of Righteouſneſs, which is not eaſy to be underſtood by every honeſt Enquirer.* Now from hence you infer, "That "the Holy Scriptures are in their own Nature "a plain, eaſy, and intelligible Standard of "Truth, and Rule of Faith; and that the "Difficulties in explaining them are of our own "making, ariſing not from any Obſcurity in "the Books themſelves, but from a *natural* or "*moral Incapacity* in the Readers or Interpre-"ters." Here, after you had granted the *Scriptures* to be a plain, eaſy, and intelligible Rule of Faith and Practice to every *honeſt Enquirer*, or to all who are morally diſpoſed for it, and do not incapacitate themſelves, you preſently reaſſume the Grant by a *natural Incapacity*; for in order to a right underſtanding of *Scripture*, in many very great and important Points relating to both Faith and Practice, you require a great deal of Knowledge and Skill in Languages and Criticiſm, and Ability to examine

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and compare the different Use and Acceptation of certain technical Words, and a thorough Acquaintance in Ecclesiastical History. Now these are Qualifications which must at least incapacitate 999 in a 1000 of those, who might be otherwise *honest Enquirers*, and morally disposed to receive and obey the Truth. But how comes it about, that while you here maintain the *Scripture* to be an easy intelligible Standard and Rule of Faith and Practice to every *honest Enquirer*, and that it must be inconsistent with the Wisdom and Goodness of God to suppose otherwise, that you suppose at the same Time not one in a Thousand of those *honest Enquirers* capable of the right Use and Application of this plain and easy Rule? To what Purpose is it that a Rule is plain *in it self*, if it is above and beyond the *natural Capacities* of those for whom it is intended? Every Thing I suppose is plain and intelligible enough *in it self*; and the Reason why we do not understand every Thing, and are not omniscient, is only for Want of a *natural Capacity*. 'Tis inconsistent then it seems with the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to give us a Rule of Faith and Practice, which is not plain, easy, and intelligible, to every *honest Enquirer*; and yet God has given us such a Rule, which can only be understood and explain'd by *Philosophers and learned Men*; nay, which cannot be understood by any *mortal Man*: for I hope you have not so soon forgot your Notion of *Mysteries*, or those Articles of Faith, which are necessary to be believed in order to Salvation, and which are yet perfectly unintelligible, or above and beyond all human Reason and Comprehension. No Man can be

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taught, reproved, corrected, or inſtructed, by what he does not or cannot underſtand; and yet the principal Articles of the Chriſtian Faith are ſuch, as he does not and cannot underſtand. The *Scripture* therefore, according to you, muſt be a plain, eaſy, intelligible Rule, that cannot be explain'd or underſtood; and it muſt doubtleſs very much conduce to the Conviction of *Deiſts* and *Infidels*, to be taught from ſo great a Maſter, that Chriſtianity is a Syſtem of very plain obſcure, eaſy difficult, intelligible incomprehenſible Doctrines.

But I ſhall farther conſider this, when I come to the Account you give of a ſuper-rational *Spirit* in Man, diſtinct from the rational Soul. At preſent, the Difficulty is how to reconcile Men in their different Notions and Apprehenſions concerning external ritual Worſhip, and Church-Government. Now here you muſt allow, that the *Scripture* to the common People can be no Rule at all in thoſe Matters, becauſe they want a natural Capacity, or ſufficient Learning, to enable and qualify them for ſuch Enquiries. But you will ſay, perhaps, that theſe unlearned Chriſtians muſt be ſtill inexcuſable, if they are not directed right and led into the Truth, becauſe there are learned Men enough of *natural Capacity*, who are ready to aſſiſt them by due Information, and right Inſtruction. I muſt ask you then, who and where are thoſe Men of *natural Capacity* and *Integrity*, whom all unlearned Chriſtians ought to refer to, and be determined by in ſuch Matters? If the Right of Judgment and Deciſion lies in *you* and the learned Men of *your Party*, you ought to make it appear, and produce your Commiſ-

ſion,

ſion, ſo as to ſatisfy the learned honeſt Men of all other Parties, and then you need not doubt of the common People. But what lurks at the Bottom is this, that there are no learned honeſt Men of any other Church or Party but your own. If any Man is not of your Mind, in the diſputable Points relating to Hereſy, Schiſm, ritual Worſhip, and Church-Government, it is for want of Learning or Integrity, and your Adverſaries are all either Fools or Knaves, or both. But if this be your Method of ſecuring the Claims and Intereſts of a Party, I doubt not but there are learned impartial Men enough, even in the Church of *England*, to deſpiſe ſuch a Defence. Your frequent applying the Caſe to the *Mathematicks*, in which the Learned are all agreed, is mere trifling. If you would have the Inſtance parallel, you muſt ſuppoſe the Mathematicians divided among themſelves into different Sects and Parties, all contradicting and oppoſing one another; as is the Caſe with the learned Divines in the Matters you refer to; and then tell me what Weight or Authority they ought to have with the common People, in thoſe Matters concerning which they could never agree among themſelves. If the Mathematicians were no better agreed among themſelves about the ſeveral Affections and Relations of Number and Quantity, than the warm Party-Zealots are, in the diſputable Points relating to Rituals and Diſcipline, and yet ſhould diſcover the ſame Heat and Rage in contending for their repugnant and irreconcilable Hypotheſes, they might very worthily be ſlighted and deſpiſed. But the Caſe is quite otherwiſe; and I am perſwaded your Argument will receive

ceive no Strength or Grace, by applying it to the *Mathematicks*. Let a Man's particular Scheme and Theory of ſpeculative Belief, and external Rites and Modes of Worſhip and Church-Government, be what it will; if he ſhall be too warm and zealous in contending for it, lay the whole Streſs of Chriſtianity upon it, and tack the Criteria of his own Party to the Catholick Terms of Salvation and Acceptance with God; the unprejudiced World will be apt to conclude, that there is Something more in it than he is willing to own, and that it is not ſo much Religion, and the Salvation of Souls, as the Power and Intereſt of his own Party, that he is thus paſſionately concerned about; and how much ſoever a Deſign may be coloured or diſguiſed, it is for the moſt Part very eaſy to diſcover what Men are contending for, by their Manner of contending. From hence one can hardly be miſtaken, in gueſſing at the Reaſon of your Anger and Reſentments againſt that moſt excellent and truly Chriſtian Prelate, who has ſo bravely diſtinguiſhed himſelf in Defence of the Civil and Religious Rights and Liberties of Mankind. His Lordſhip's Scheme, like the Goſpel it ſelf, caſts a favourable and benign Aſpect upon the World about him, and is not calculated to promote the ſecular excluſive Intereſt and exorbitant Power of a Party. He cannot juſtify any Church upon Earth in aſſuming the Prerogatives of Chriſt, and claiming a ſpiritual Juriſdiction over the Hearts and Conſciences of Men; he ſuppoſes all Men to be equally good Chriſtians, who equally ſubmit to the Authority of Chriſt, and who are equally and ſincerely diſpoſed to know

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and do the Will of God. The good Bishop ever takes Care to distinguish betwixt the peculiar Tenets of this or the other Party, and the Catholick Terms of Christian Communion and Acceptance with God. Now this is treating Mankind fairly, and doing as one would be done by; for which it cannot be expected, that Men of your Cast in Controversy should ever forgive his Lordship.

Before I quit what relates to his Lordship, I must here take a little Notice of the Abuse you offer him, with Regard to his Notion of Sincerity. You have often wondered you say, *p.* 61. "What Reason (*except Reasons of State*, "which are always out of the Question) should "influence a Prelate of great Learning and Sa"gacity, to scatter such a loose indigested No"tion among the giddy unstable Multitude; "and to make it, as he seems to have done, the "chief, if not the only, Qualification for our "Acceptance with God. —— The common "and popular Notion of Sincerity, is a plain, "open, and undisguised Behaviour; and a sin"cere Man is one that says what he thinks, or "means what he says. And I can assure his "Lordship, whatever Intention he might have, "this is the Sense in which the *Generality* of "his Friends and Admirers understand it; who "upon his great Authority speak Peace to "their Consciences, and think themselves ju"stify'd before God and Man, for professing "openly what they really and sincerely believe, "be it in its own Nature true or false. So "that at this Rate there is no such Thing as "positive Truth in the Gospel; or if there be, it "is not necessary to Salvation that it should be

"known.

" known. There is at this Rate, no neceſſary " Connexion betwixt evangelical Truth and e- " vangelical Holineſs: So that had there been " no *Scripture given by Inſpiration of God, a Man* " *might have been perfect and throughly furniſhed to* " *all good Works*". You here charge upon the Generality of his Lordſhip's Friends and Admirers, a very groſs and dangerous Notion of Sincerity; in which Senſe you ſay his Lordſhip has been generally underſtood, whatever he intended; and that Men ſpeak Peace to their Conſciences herein upon his Lordſhip's Authority. I believe I may claim, at leaſt, the Honour of as large an Acquaintance among his Lordſhip's Friends and Admirers, as you can pretend to; and yet ſo far as my Acquaintance and Information go, I can aſſure his Lordſhip, that the quite contrary to all this is true. And if you cannot produce any one learned Divine, or Caſuiſt, who has ever conſidered or treated of religious Sincerity in this groſs miſtaken Senſe; if you cannot find any one learned Man among his Lordſhip's Friends and Admirers, who has eſpouſed his Cauſe, or appeared in his Defence, and who has thus underſtood his Notion and Account of Sincerity; nay, if you cannot produce any of thoſe among the Generality of his Lordſhip's common Friends, and unlearned Admirers, who have ever been led into ſuch a Miſtake by his Lordſhip's Writings, or who ſpeak Peace to their Conſciences upon any ſuch Foundation: I ſay, if you can do nothing of all this, as I verily believe you cannot, I muſt here appeal to the Publick, whether you are not obliged ſolemnly to repent and humble your ſelf before God, and to ask Pardon of his Lordſhip,

Lordſhip, and the World, for this open and notorious Piece of pure Calumny and Scandal? Sincerity, in his Lordſhip's Account, conſiſts in a Man's acting up with Steadineſs and Reſolution to that which ſhall appear juſt and reaſonable to his own Underſtanding, *after a free impartial and unprejudiced Enquiry.*

I have never met with any one of his Lordſhip's Friends who has underſtood him otherwiſe; and I think it is hardly poſſible for any Man, without the deepeſt Prejudice, and wilful Blindneſs, to underſtand him in any other Senſe. His Lordſhip's Notion of Sincerity, is evidently the very ſame with that, which you have been forced to eſpouſe and declare for, your ſelf: But the Difference lies here, that his Lordſhip can allow Men to be very ſincere and honeſt in their Enquiries, (conſidering their different Capacities, Talents, and Opportunities,) tho' they ſhould, after all, differ very conſiderably in their Judgments concerning ſeveral ſpeculative Points of Belief, and the different Rites and Modes of external Worſhip, and Church-Government; whereas you (for ſuch ſeems to be the Complection of your Conſcience) can allow no Man to be impartial and unprejudiced in his Enquiries, 'till he comes into your Scheme, and makes himſelf of your Party. For my own Part, tho' I can eaſily grant that a Man might be very ſincere and honeſt in his Enquiries, who ſhould give into the Scheme which you have here advanced; yet I am apt to think that his ſuppoſed Clearneſs, or great Satisfaction in it, muſt be owing to a certain Defect in his Underſtanding, which he is not ſenſible of. In

your Way of Talking, it might ſeem a little unaccountable, how a Man's being actually in the right in all the Parts of his religious Scheme, ſhould be neceſſary to Salvation; and yet, that there are ſome Errors in Judgment concerning ſuch Matters, which are not damnable. Now, to clear up this Difficulty, you have found out a very remarkable Diſtinction; and you tell us, *p.* 63. "Tho' I do not pronounce every Error of Judgment to be damnable, God forbid! yet I do aſſert, that ſo far as we are in Error, ſo far are we out of the Way of Salvation, tho' we fancy we are in the right." I cannot eaſily reconcile what you ſay here, either to Truth or common Senſe. You allow that there are ſome Errors in theſe Matters, which are not damnable; no, *God forbid!* and yet all Error, ſo far as a Man is in it, puts him out of the Way of Salvation. If therefore he be really in it, it muſt really put him out of the Way of Salvation; but if he be only in Danger of it, or inclined towards it, it can only endanger his Salvation. I cannot perceive the Difference betwixt a damnable Error, and an Error that puts a Man out of the Way of Salvation. But what you ſeem to aim at is this, Men may be partly out of the Way of Salvation, and partly in it. Some Errors put a Man quite out of the Way of Salvation, and ſome but half-way, or partly out. Perhaps it may be owing to the Dullneſs of my Apprehenſion, but I muſt own that I cannot conceive this; it ſeems to me, that every Man muſt be either in, or out of the Way of Salvation: but if there be a middle State, I would ask, what muſt become of this middling

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ſort of People; will they be either ſaved, or damned, or neither? And ſince all Error is not damnable, and yet all Error *ſo far* puts a Man out of the Way of Salvation, I would ask, how far, upon your Principles, a Man may be *ſaved*, out of the *Way of Salvation?* I hope, you will take ſome proper Opportunity farther to clear up and ſettle this very important Point. If you would do this, it might poſſibly give you an Occaſion to diſcover all the dark Receſſes of a Scheme, which I find you have not hitherto thoroughly examined. But I muſt not forget the oracular Deciſion you have made, concerning the Point of Schiſm, between the Church and Diſſenters; which I the more willingly take Notice of, becauſe it may ſerve as a notable Inſtance of your Skill and Authority in deciding Controverſies, *p.* 58. "The Nature and "Guilt of Schiſm is yet plainer to be under-"ſtood, as depending on fewer and more ſim-"ple Ideas; ſo that a moderate Share of Un-"derſtanding, with due Attention, Sincerity, "and Ingenuity, cannot fail to give a Man a "right Notion of it: And did I not know "the monſtrous *Artifice* and *Impudence* of ſome "of the Leaders, and the more than ſuperſti-"tious Credulity of the Herd, I ſhould be "as much ſurpriz'd at the ſeveral Separations "from the Church of *England*, as I ſhould, to "ſee a whole Nation at Logger-Heads upon "the Queſtion, whether a Triangle had three "Sides as well as three Corners! And yet "they all talk gravely of their Reaſon, and "offer many Reaſons, as they call them, "for their Separation; which conſiſt of "a certain Cant, an odd Form of incoherent

" Words, uttered with a formal Countenance,
" which are handed thro' the Crowd, by
" a few, who are in the Direction of the Par-
" ty; who muſt certainly *act upon Reaſons,*
" *but ſuch as they dare not own to the abuſed Mul-*
" *titude*; who are led by the mere Force of emp-
" ty Sounds, artfully apply'd, into the moſt
" abſurd Notions, and unreaſonable Practices.
" There is, for inſtance, a natural Malignity
" in the Words *Popery, Popiſh, Anti-chriſtian,*
" the *Maſs, Hierarchy,* &c. The Sound of them
" implies Error, Confuſion, Tyranny, the De-
" vil, and all his Works. On the other Hand,
" there is a Soul-ſaving Sweetneſs, a native
" Benignity in the Words, *Proteſtant Religion,*
" *Goſpel-Ordinances, Moderation, Edification,* &c.
" by a right Application of which, the Popu-
" lace among them are as abſolutely led and di-
" rected, as any Piece of Machinery upon Mr.
" *Powel*'s Theatre. —— Upon the whole, they
" make as unreaſonable Pretences to Reaſon,
" and Freedom of Thought, as their Brethren
" the *Free-thinkers*; and I muſt take the Liberty
" to ſay, that till they are able to prove, by a
" clear and evident Chain of Reaſon, that the
" Terms of Communion with the Church of *En-*
" *gland* are unreaſonable and ſinful, they muſt
" not take it ill to be told, that they are guilty of
" Schiſm, or a cauſeleſs Separation from a ſound
" Branch of the Catholick Church. Nor will it
" avail them any Thing to inſiſt upon their Sin-
" cerity; a Plea that may with as much Pro-
" priety be urged in Defence of Treaſon, or
" Horſe-ſtealing, as of Hereſy or Schiſm." Such a
Piece of *Don Quixotiſm* as this, might have paſ-
ſed perhaps as a notable ſmart Declamation in

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an Univerſity, and have been kindly taken by ſome implicit believing Zealots, who come to Church on *Sundays* only to be furniſhed with Matter of Raillery for the Week. But many Things, which might do well enough among Friends, are not ſo proper for a more general Inſpection. The World will certainly diſtinguiſh betwixt Railing, and Reaſoning; and therefore I cannot but wonder you ſhould truſt this to a publick Examination and Scrutiny.

However, you acted prudently in concealing your Name, ſince it can never be either for the Intereſt or Honour of thoſe, who are imploy'd in ſuch Work, to be perſonally known. As to the Diſſenters taking it ill to be call'd Schiſmaticks, you need not be in any Pain, *Sir:* For after ſo frank a Declaration of your Kindneſs, I dare engage for them, that they will not think any Thing you can ſay to be a Matter of much Scandal; and they ought rather I think to glory in it, that you have ſo ill an Opinion of them, after you have plainly diſcovered your great Abilities againſt them. Whatever the Separation be betwixt the Conformiſts and Non-conformiſts, it is certainly mutual, and they both equally and alike ſeparate from one another. Suppoſe then, that to carry on the Jeſt, I ſhould ſet the *Kirk* of *Scotland* againſt you, and tell you roundly, that till you can prove by a clear and evident *Chain of Reaſon*, that the Terms of Communion with that *Kirk* are *unreaſonable* and *ſinful*, you muſt not take it ill to be told, that you are guilty of *Schiſm*, or a cauſeleſs Separation from a *ſound Branch* of the *Catholick Church*. If you ſhould ſay, that the Model of Government, and Terms

of Communion in that Church, have been already ſufficiently demonſtrated to be unreaſonable and ſinful, by many able and learned Men; a true *Kirk* Man will as abſolutely deny this, and as poſitively inſiſt on the contrary; and then he would be even with you, and have ſaid as much in Defence of his own Church, as you have in Defence of yours. But what do you here mean by a *ſound Branch* of the *Catholick Church*? Is your Church *ſound* in every Thing; in all Points of Faith and Practice, without Exception? Have you nothing amiſs among you? No Flaws in the Conſtitution? Nothing at all that needs Amendment? If this be the Caſe you are very happy, perfectly *ſound* indeed; and 'tis great Pity you ſhould not be able to make it appear, by a clear and evident *Chain of Reaſon*. This however, I ſuppoſe, is what you will not pretend to make as evident, as it is that a Triangle has *three Sides* as well as *three Corners*. If therefore you muſt content your ſelf with being *ſound* in Fundamentals, ſound in all the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity, or in every Thing relating to the Catholick Terms of Communion and Acceptance with God; if this be the only *Soundneſs* you can reaſonably pretend to, why, I beſeech you, may not other Churches, other Branches of the Catholick Church, be as *ſound* as yours, notwithſtanding their different Form and Model of external Worſhip and Church-Government? All true Chriſtians who believe and practice every Thing the *Scripture* has made neceſſary to Salvation, muſt I ſuppoſe be of one Church and one Communion, even of the Catholick Church, whatever other Marks or Characteriſticks they may be diſtinguiſhed by,

by, with Regard to external Diſcipline, and Modes of Worſhip. If that Faith and Repentance, which the Goſpel requires, as the Means of our Juſtification and Acceptance with God, be not ſufficient to Catholick Unity and Communion, unleſs Men agree likewiſe in one external Form of Church-Government and ritual Worſhip; 'tis plain, there can be no ſuch Thing as a Catholick Church upon Earth; but the Church of *England* in particular, and all other Churches, muſt be Schiſmatical with reſpect to each other: And this will conſtitute not the Catholick Church, or the ſpiritual Kingdom of Chriſt, but a confuſed Medley and Jumble of ſecular Parties and Factions. When thoſe who ſhould be the Miniſters of Peace and Reconciliation, not contenting themſelves with the Catholick Terms of Communions as laid down in *Scripture*, ſhall form Parties and Factions, upon ſecular Views and Intereſts of their own, and endeavour to ſave Mens Souls by ſetting the World together by the Ears, they make themſelves the Subjects of Ridicule; and the Ridicule will be juſt from what Quarter ſoever it comes; even tho' it ſhould be laid in by *Atheiſts*, *Deiſts*, and *Infidels*. But however you may ſometimes, to ſerve a Turn, cry up our legal Church Conſtitution as the beſt in World; I could name you many Things, which have been loudly and bitterly complain'd of, by the Gentlemen of your Principles, as great and ſore Evils in the Church as eſtabliſhed by Law. What, I beſeech you in the Name of a High Church-man, can you think of a Church, that has ſo far betray'd her Truſt, and the Chriſtian Cauſe, as to have gi-

ven up and ſubjected all the Powers and Spiritualities of Chriſt's Kingdom, to a Civil Juriſdiction? What, upon your own Principles, can you think of a Church, that claims I know not what ſort of Authority, after ſhe has given up and ſworn away all Authority to the Crown? I hope, *Sir*, you are a good Church-man, and that you do not repent your Oaths; and therefore if you can find any Authority, that is neither Eccleſiaſtical nor Civil, nor of any Sort or Kind whatever, I ſhall readily ſubmit to you in all Matters, which may happen to fall under ſuch a Juriſdiction. Now, ſetting aſide the Authority of the Church, which, I hope we may lawfully do, after the Church her ſelf has renounced all Authority upon Oath; I would fain know what Obligation the Diſſenters are under to Conformity, or how they come to be Schiſmaticks, for not worſhipping God according to the human Rites and Forms of the Church of *England?* It will be to no Purpoſe here to ſay, that the Terms of Conformity are not in themſelves ſinful; or that nothing is required upon the Foot of any human Authority, but Things indifferent: For let this be ſuppoſed at preſent, let the Things required be in their own Nature and common Uſe ever ſo *indifferent*, or even *trifling*; yet ſtill where there is no Authority, there can be no Obligation to Obedience; and the Juſtice and Equity of throwing off any Claim of *Authority*, where there is no *Right*, will always be a ſufficient Reaſon for Non-ſubmiſſion. Beſides, if the Things impoſed are indifferent, why are they made neceſſary? Nothing I think can be more abſurd, than to pretend by any human Authority

thority to alter the Nature of Things. If the *Croſs* in Baptiſm, for Inſtance, is indifferent, why is it inſeparably tack'd to a divine Inſtitution? And why muſt Children be deny'd Baptiſm, if their Parents cannot be ſatisfy'd in the Expediency or Lawfulneſs of it? Let me add, that Things which are in their own Nature indifferent or lawful, may not appear ſo to every one alike. Natural Weakneſs, or an unavoidable Tenderneſs of Conſcience, may ſometimes occaſion even groundleſs Scruples, where there is no ſinful Prejudice or Paſſion in the Way: And muſt all ſuch be excluded from Chriſtian Communion, and given to the Devil, only for want of a better Underſtanding, or a ſtronger Faith? The Church, I ſuppoſe, as a tender Mother, ought to take a prudent Care of all her Children, and not nouriſh and cheriſh the ſtrong and healthy only, and caſt the weak and ſickly away. If a weak or ſickly Child has an Averſion to a particular Diſh, tho' perhaps it may be owing to his Diſtemper, why ſhould he be cramm'd with it; or caſt out of the Family and the Mother's Boſom, to periſh for want of Food, becauſe he cannot feed as the ſtrong and healthy do? You may ſuppoſe therefore, if you pleaſe, that the Diſſenters are under a *natural Incapacity* to Conformity; let their Scruples, if you will, be owing to an incurable Weakneſs of Underſtanding; yet ſtill you ought to remove the Ground of thoſe Scruples, eſpecially when by your own Acknowledgment the Matter of their Complaint is only Things indifferent, and ſuch as may be altered at Pleaſure. The Church might certainly leave Men to their Liberty in Things in-

indifferent, and this is all that is desired. To destroy Liberty in Things indifferent, is to exercise Authority only for Authority's sake; which is the more inexcusable, because it lays the Imposer under a Self-condemnation, and the Necessity of confessing the Imposition to be needless. I have said all this upon your own Supposition, that the Terms of Conformity are in all Respects *Lawful*; yet it will not follow from hence, that they are *necessary*, or that we are under any Obligation of submitting to them. But after all, the *Lawfulness* of any mere human positive Rites and Institutions, in the Worship of God, has never yet been clear'd. Let a Thing be ever so indifferent or lawful in its own Nature, and in civil and common Use; yet it cannot be infer'd from hence, that Men may introduce and practise it in the Worship of God, under a spiritual and religious Signification; because this takes the Thing off from its natural and common Use, and applies it to another Purpose, without any sufficient Authority. Doubtless you would think your self very well justify'd in any of the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, if one should not be able to produce any clear express Texts in which they are forbidden; and yet this is evidently a wrong Rule, and a Principle upon which a Thousand other Ceremonies and human Institutions might at any Time be introduced, and the Christian Service rendered more grievous and burdensome than the Law of *Moses*. And it will be no good Answer to this Question, *Who hath requir'd these Things at your Hands?* to say, that they were not forbidden, or that they were only in themselves Things indifferent.

A Man might kill a Calf in his own House, eat some Parts of it and burn the rest, and this in its natural and common Use would be an indifferent Action: But who will say, that therefore the Church may institute such a Practice in her publick Service, as a Part of Religion and divine Worship? The extreme Difference in these two Cases must be visible to every Body. The sacrificing of Dogs in the Temple was no where forbidden in the Law of *Moses*, and yet we know that such an Offering must have been *an Abomination to the Lord.* And why the Sacrifice of a *Dog* so abominable more than that of a *Goat?* I suppose it would be hard to find any Reason in the Nature of the Thing. But the true Reason is plainly this, because there was a Command in the one Case, and none in the other.

It might be wished therefore, that those who are so fond in some Cases of imitating the Legal Priesthood, and introducing real Sacrifices into the Christian Service, would but consider how punctually these Levitical Priests kept to their divine Institution, and never receded from it in any one Particular, but God in some remarkable Way or other discovered his Indignation and Displeasure.

These Considerations, to mention no more at present, seem to me to have some Weight in them. But I hope you will take a proper Opportunity to make the contrary as evident, as that a Triangle must have *three Sides*, as well as *three Corners*; and that the Dissenters are still as inexcusable in their Separation, as *Traitors* and *Horse-stealers*.

Having

Having thus knock'd down the Diſſenters, you proceed in the ſame Maſterly Way, to put an End to the *Trinitarian* Controverſy, *p.* 65. "And as for our *Arian* Adverſaries, "who talk more of their Reaſon, and as "much of their Sincerity, as the Schiſmaticks; "the learned World will ſoon have a very "mean Opinion of either, unleſs they quit "their Pretenſions to both, after having been "ſo clearly, ſo rationally, ſo learnedly confu-"ted, by thoſe many *eminent Defenders* of the "Catholick Faith, that have of late gloriouſly "diſtinguiſhed themſelves in that Controver-"ſy." What the *learned World* will conclude concerning *theſe Defenders*, or what Reputation they will ſecure to themſelves by that Time the Controverſy is ended, I cannot exactly determine; but one Thing I am pretty ſure of, that the *learned World* muſt have but a mean Opinion of your Performance, and that the Cauſe of Orthodoxy is very little indebted to you for its *Defence*. But you ſeem to have been aware, that your Scheme could not be defended upon the *Principles of Reaſon*; and therefore not daring to venture your ſelf farther among theſe Quick-ſands, you think it expedient, towards the Cloſe of your Book, to become inviſible, by quitting the Body and the rational Soul, while you aſſume the Character and talk in the Quality of a *Super-rational Spirit*. And having thus left the Regions of Mortality, ſoar'd above the third Heavens, and clothed your ſelf with myſterious inacceſſible Light; you look down with Majeſty and Contempt upon thoſe poor groveling Creatures, who have no other perceptive Powers but Senſe and Reaſon, and who, for want of ſpiritual Faculties,

Faculties, are as much inferior to your ſuper-rational Dignity, as a Worm is to an Angel. You tell us, *p.* 66. "That there are in every true "Chriſtian, three diſtinct Conſtituent Princi-"ples, Body, Soul, and Spirit; each of which "have their diſtinct Powers, Faculties, and "Offices." Here 'tis plain, that you conſider the *Spirit* as an immaterial Subſtance, or Subject of Agency and Properties diſtinct from the *Soul*. You juſt after indeed call the *Spirit* a *Faculty*, but then you call the *Soul* it ſelf a *Faculty* too; from whence one would think, that you make no Diſtinction in your Philoſophy between Subſtances and Attributes, Agents and Faculties, or at leaſt, that you know not what to make of *this Spirit*, nor are much concerned what other People think of it, provided they will but allow you to have ſaid ſomething extraordinary; and this I ſuppoſe will be readily granted. You leave us at Liberty, to ſuppoſe this *Spirit* to be a Subſtance or a Property, a Subject; a Principle, a Faculty, or what we pleaſe. For my own Part, I am not much concerned to enquire what it is; but I ſhall ſettle the Account with you, in reference to the *Body* and the *Soul* of Man, and having allotted theſe their Due, you will have my free Leave to make the moſt of what remains for the *Spirit*. It may be worth while here to conſider the Reaſon you aſſign, why there muſt be ſuch a *Spirit* in Man, as a Subject or Principle of Actions and Properties, diſtinct from the *rational Soul*; and that is, becauſe otherwiſe, as you imagine, we could have no poſſible Communication with the ſpiritual World, or be capable of forming any Ideas but of bare material Objects. For you tell us,

that

that, " By our bodily Senſes we converſe with " this material World, ſurvey the ſeveral Parts " of Matter, examine their Forms, Bulks, Di- " menſions, and other ſenſible Qualities: From " hence we raiſe Ideas, which are lodged in " the Memory, or painted on the Imagina- " tion; and to judge of theſe, to compare their " ſeveral Habitudes and Relations, and draw " Concluſions, is the *whole Province of Rea-* " *ſon.*"

Here you would perſuade us, that the rational Soul has no Ideas or Perceptions but thoſe of Senſation only; ſuch as are excited in the Mind, by the Impreſſions of material Objects upon the Senſories of material Organs, as the Ideas of *Extenſion*, *Solidity*, *Figure*, *Motion*, *Colour*, *Sound*, &c. and conſequently, that without ſome Principle, or Faculty, ſuperior to Reaſon, we could never form any Idea of a ſpiritual Being, or of any Thing but material Objects, and their ſeveral Modes, Relations, and Analogies, to one another. I would here ask you, in the firſt Place, whether thoſe Ideas of Senſation before mentioned, are not themſelves purely immaterial, and Modifications of the ſpiritual immaterial Soul? Thoſe Ideas which are the immediate Objects of your Senſe and Perception, are certainly immaterial; and tho' they give you Notice of the ſeveral Properties and Relations of Bodies without you, yet the Ideas themſelves I ſuppoſe are not *Matter*, or any Thing Corporeal. And therefore in theſe very *Senſations*, you know as much of *Spirit* as you do of *Matter*; you hereby perceive certain *Modes* and *Attributes* of *Spirit*, and this is all that you can know of *Matter*. But then

you

you here allow farther, that the Soul has a Power of reflecting and reasoning upon, of abstracting, compounding, and comparing its Ideas, in order to discover their mutual Habitudes and Relations, by which we form *Propositions*, and come to the Knowledge of general *abstract Truths*. Now by reflecting upon these *rational Operations* of the Mind, which are themselves the Objects of our *Perception*, we derive and form to our selves an intirely new Set or Class of Ideas, as distinct and different from the Ideas of *Sensation*, as the necessary mechanical Motion of a *Body*, is from the intelligent free Agency of a *Spirit*. In this Way we come by the Ideas of *Perception*, *Volition*, *Intelligence*, *Reason*, *Liberty*, *active Power*, &c. and I hope you will not say that *these* are representative of any Thing in *Bodies*; or that the abstracting, compounding, comparing, and reasoning about these and such like Ideas, can carry us no farther than the *material World*. Again, by reflecting upon our selves, and the rational Operations of our own *Souls*, we find that our rational free Actions have certain Relations of Fitness or Unfitness, Conformity or Disconformity to the Nature and Reason of Things; and from hence we form the Ideas of *Wisdom* and *Folly*, *Justice* and *Injustice*, *Right* and *Wrong*, and the several Modes and Relations of *Virtue* and *Vice*, moral *Good* and *Evil*; which are simply and purely Attributes and Qualifications of *Spirit*, and of which we find not the least Trace or Appearance in the whole System of *Bodies*, or the *material World*. Having thus obtained the Ideas of Intelligence, Wisdom, Liberty, and active Power, together with the several

veral moral Relations of our rational free Actions, we form an Idea of *God*, or a Being of infinite abſolute Perfection, only by attributing all the limited finite Perfections we find in our ſelves to God in an infinite Degree, and removing from Him whatever we conceive as implying any Thing of Weakneſs, Defect, or Imperfection. Here then is a rational, intelligible, and accountable Method of communicating with the *Spiritual World*, and with God the infinite Spirit, without your Contrivance of a ſuper-rational Spirit in Man, diſtinct from the *rational Soul*. And therefore, ſhould we ſuppoſe this *Spirit* to be a mere Phantom, and Creature of your own Imagination; yet we ſhould not be ſo intirely deſtitute, as you imagine, of all the poſſible Means of obtaining our *ſupreme Felicity*. From hence perhaps it may appear, that what you call a moſt certain Metaphyſical Axiom, *That nothing can be in the Underſtanding, that was not firſt in the Senſes*; that this, I ſay, is ſo far from being *moſt certain*, that there is nothing either of *Truth* or *common Senſe* in it. And indeed, when the Method of forming our Ideas of ſpiritual intelligent Beings, had been ſo clearly and demonſtratively explain'd and accounted for by the new Philoſophers, upon the *Principles* of *Reaſon*; 'tis wonderful methinks that ſo great a Maſter at this Time of Day ſhould throw it all off, without aſſigning any Reaſons againſt it; and fly to an old exploded ſenſeleſs Axiom in the *Pagan Philoſophy*, and to the new and vain Pretence of an immediate Inſpiration, and the Intuition of the *Logos*, the eſſential Wiſdom and Reaſon of God, by a ſuper-rational Spirit in Man, diſtinct

and

from the rational Soul. However, if you will but do that Justice to the *Soul of Man*, as to allow her her own proper Ideas of *Sensation* and *Reflection*, as they stand already in our publick Lists, I suppose it may be long enough before you will find a third and distinct Class, as peculiar to the Spirit. This I think is plain, that you have not obliged us with any such new Ideas; which gives one a shrewd Suspicion that you had no such to produce; and that not being able to talk clear and consistent Sense upon the Subject you had undertaken, you were yet resolved, rather than say nothing, to talk unintelligibly about it. I have the Honour to be acquainted with several Gentlemen of good Sense, and considerable Abilities, both among the modern Orthodox and modern Hereticks, but cannot find one Man who pretends to have the least Notion of this *super-rational Spirit*, or what its Ideas, Perceptions, and Operations are; and yet was there any such Thing, tho' the *carnal* and *rational Man* perhaps might not understand it, doubtless the *spiritual Men* must, unless the Spirit be supposed fast asleep in them too, as having never been once awakened by *Baptism* and *Regeneration*. If there be any Secret in your Application of that sort of *Baptism*, which is necessary to awaken this *Spirit* by Regeneration, you would have done well to have reveal'd this Mystery to the World; and when you found us such perfect Idiots in Theology, and the Doctrine of *Spirits*, methinks 'tis great Pity you should have left us so without your farther Assistance. But since you pretend to ground this *Distinction*, or rather *Confusion*, of intelligent Subjects, *Souls* and *Spirits*, upon Scrip-

ture; it may not be amiſs perhaps to take a little Notice of what you ſay upon that Score, *p.* 68. "From theſe three diſtinct Principles, "ariſes that Diſtinction in Holy Scripture, "between Σαρκικὸς, the carnal Man, the Ψυχικὸς, "or natural Man, and the Πνευματικὸς, or ſpi-"ritual Man. The carnal Man is under the "Dominion of the Fleſh, whoſe whole De-"light is in gratifying his fleſhly Appetites; "and theſe make up the Bulk of Mankind, "and differ from the natural Man, as a ſaga-"cious Brute does from a Man of Senſe. The "natural Man is he that has improved his ra-"tional Faculties, and prefers the Exerciſe of "his Underſtanding, before the Gratification "of his Senſes; theſe are the great Maſters of "*Reaſon*, the Leaders of the *Free-thinking Tribe*, "cunning Stateſmen, acute Philoſophers, "good Linguiſts, and Orators; but yet are "as much inferior to the ſpiritual Man, as "the moſt illiterate Labourer or Mechanick, "to the moſt ſubtle Philoſopher and Politician. "Theſe three diſtinct Principles have their "proper Objects adapted to them, in the moſt "exact Harmony and Proportion. So that as "in the natural Body, the Eye cannot perceive "the Harmony of Sounds, nor the Ear appre-"hend the Beauty of Colours, nor the Sym-"metry of Proportion; nor any one Senſe "taſte or apprehend what are the proper Ob-"jects of another: And as the united Power "of all the Senſes cannot apprehend, much "leſs demonſtrate any abſtract Truth, no more "than a Man can ſmell a Syllogiſm, or eat a "Demonſtration; ſo neither can all the Pow-"ers of Reaſon apprehend thoſe ſpiritual

"Truths,

" Truths, and Myſteries of Religion, which " are only to be apprehended by the Spirit; " which is, with Regard to them, the ſame as " the Organs of Senſe are to their proper Ob- " jects. Hence it is evident, that he who " would judge, determine, and purſue, the " practical Concluſions of thoſe Determina- " tions, about the Nature and Properties of " ſpiritual and divine Things, by his Reaſon, " acts as contrary to Reaſon, as he who ſhould " attempt to ſee without Eyes, or hear with- " out Ears." You here invent a Diſtinction between σαρκικὸς, and ψυχικὸς, the carnal and the natural Man, without the leaſt Foundation or Appearance of Reaſon in the Holy Scriptures. Theſe Terms in Scripture are every where uſed indifferently and without Diſtinction, as expreſſive of the very ſame perſonal Characteriſticks, Tempers, and Diſpoſitions of Mind. The *Fleſh* and the *Spirit*, with the different Effects and Fruits of each, are every where oppoſed as direct Contraries, without the leaſt Hint or Intimation in Scripture, of any intermediate Principle, that is neither Fleſh nor Spirit. You ſeem to take ſome Advantage from our *Engliſh* Tranſlation of the Word ψύχικος, which we very indifferently render *natural*; and you would farther pervert the true Import of the Word, and make it ſignify *rational*. The Word ψυχὴ is rendered frequently and indifferently by the *Engliſh* Words *Soul*, or *Life*, and ſtands plainly for the animal Nature of Man; or for the *Soul*, conſidered under its inferior, animal, or ſenſitive Capacity, as it receives Senſations, and various Impreſſions of Pleaſure and Pain, by means of its Union and

Commerce with the Body: as on the other Hand the πνεῦμα, or Spirit of Man, is the Soul conſidered in its ſuperior, rational, or intellectual Capacity. While a Man makes a right Uſe of his Reaſon, about the Intereſts and Concernments of his Soul, in order to diſcharge his preſent Duty, and obtain the future Happineſs which the Goſpel propoſes, he is conſidered as *ſpiritual*; but when this is neglected, when a Man perverts and abuſes his Reaſon, with Regard to the ſpiritual Intereſts and Concerns of his Soul, how wiſe or rational ſoever he may act in other Reſpects, he is in the Language and Stile of Scripture a *carnal* and *animal* Man: Becauſe whatever elſe he aims at and purſues, while he neglects his Soul and the Duties of Religion, all his other Deſires and Purſuits muſt terminate in a mere *earthly Felicity*; the unreaſonable Inclination to *which*, ariſes from a corrupt vitiated and depraved *animal Conſtitution*. Hence St. *Paul* in *Gal.* 5. and other Places, where he reckons up the Works of the *Fleſh*, aſcribes to this Principle all ſorts of moral Evil, as well the more refined Vices of Philoſophers and Politicians, as the groſſer Luſts and Acts of Senſuality. So that what you will do in this Caſe with the Scripture, or where you will find your intermediate Principle; a natural or rational Man, who in the *Scripture Senſe* is neither a carnal or ſpiritual Man; I cannot imagine. There is one Thing farther that I cannot but obſerve and complain of, in this Management of yours, which is this, that while you are here robbing the Soul of one half of her Ideas, in order to furniſh out the Spirit, you beſtow the other half upon the Body; and hereby

hereby you seem to have quite rifled the Soul, leaving her a mere *rasa Tabula*, or naked Essence, without any Ideas, Agency, or Attributes at all. You talk of the Bodily Senses, the material Organs, or the *Eyes* and *Ears*, as *perceiving* and *judging*, with respect to their proper Objects. It has been hitherto supposed by the Philosophers and all *rational Men*, that 'tis the *Mind* or *Soul* only that perceives and judges by the Means and Instrumentality of the Eyes, Ears, and corporeal Sensories. But here you make those material Organs themselves the Agents, or the Subjects of Intelligence, Perception, and Judgment, with respect to their *proper Objects*. Nay, these intelligent judicious Eyes and Ears do not only perceive and judge, but they perceive and judge rationally and discriminately concerning the *Symmetry* and *Proportion* of *Colours*, *Sounds*, &c. and therefore 'tis evident that, in your Account, these Organs, the Eyes and Ears, *&c.* must perform all the Offices and Operations of the rational Soul, with respect to their proper Objects; and since, according to your *most certain* Axiom, nothing can be in the Understanding that was not first in the Senses, I see no Occasion you can, have in your Scheme, for any Understanding or rational Soul at all. But as you are seldom pleased to assert any Thing, without denying it again in other Words; so here you presently contradict your self, by saying, that the united Power of *all the Senses* cannot apprehend, much less demonstrate, any abstracted Truth, no more than a Man can smell a Sylogism, or eat a Demonstration. But if you can shew how the Eyes and Ears should perceive and judge of the *Symmetry* and *Proportion*

of Colours and Sounds, or of any *Symmetry* and *Proportion* at all, without comparing their Ideas, reaſoning upon them, and forming general abſtract Truths; if you can, I ſay, reconcile this, you will do Something that One can hardly expect from any Body elſe. But I need not take much Pains to ſhew the Abſurdity and Inconſiſtency of your Scheme; for you have defy'd your *own Reaſon* in ſo many *Self-contradictions*, that you have left ſcarce any Thing for an Anſwerer to do, but to collect and put them together. While you condeſcended to talk in the Quality of a reaſonable Creature, you aſſigned *Reaſon* a very large and extenſive *Province*; all the moral Virtues, and practical Doctrines of Chriſtianity, were then under the Juriſdiction of *Reaſon:* He who would judge of the Doctrines and Precepts of the Goſpel, muſt calmly *conſult his Reaſon*, and then he will ſoon find, that they are only the Doctrines of natural Religion improved, ſet in a clearer Light, and enforced by higher Motives and nobler Rewards, *p.* 43. The Holy Scriptures were then a *plain*, *eaſy*, *intelligible* Standard of Truth, and Rule of *Faith*; ſince no Man can be *taught*, *reproved*, *corrected*, or *inſtructed*, by what he does not or cannot *underſtand*; and a Man of common *Honeſty* and *Capacity* might, even from the very worſt MS. or Tranſlation of the Bible, draw a *clear*, *uniform*, intelligible Syſtem of Duty, *p.* 50, 51. Nay, even the moſt abſtracted and ſpeculative Points of Divinity, the moſt ſubtle and refined Attributes and Relations of ſpiritual Beings, in Reference to Juſtification, Predeſtination, *&c.* were then properly *within the Verge and Province of Reaſon*, and

and might be very eaſily and plainly accounted for, by a Perſon of *right Reaſon*, and an *honeſt Heart*, p. 57. But now you are got into your ſpiritual ſuper-rational Altitudes, all this is recall'd and revoked: Now, to examine and judge concerning the Modes, Properties, and Relations of Bodies and material Objects, is the *whole Province of Reaſon*. Reaſon is now tied down to Matter and Mechanical Motion, and cannot carry her Views or Inquiries one Hair's Breadth beyond the *bare Intelligence* of the *bodily Senſes*: 'Tis the *Spirit* only that can judge of *Spirits*: The rational Soul is a groſs material Thing; but little, if at all, ſuperior to the perceiving thinking material Organs; and he who ſhould go about to examine, or judge of the Nature, Properties, and Relations of *ſpiritual Beings*, by his *Reaſon*, would act as *contrary to Reaſon*, as he who ſhould pretend to *ſee without Eyes*, or to *hear without Ears*. But thoſe who can approve of, or embrace ſuch an Hypotheſis, muſt I ſuppoſe be neither rational nor ſuper-rational; and whatever your *Faith* be, ſure I am that your *Scheme* is abſurd, ſenſeleſs, and *contrary to Reaſon*. If you think that no rational *human Soul* ought to have made ſo free with the *human Spirit*, I have only this to ſay for my ſelf, that you had dreſs'd up and repreſented your *Spirit* in ſuch a manner, that I could not forbear laughing at it; and if the *ſpiritual Men* cannot take the *Ridicule*, they ought not to pour out their Contempt and Raillery upon others, without Argument or Reaſon. I am, Sir, in reference to all the Obligations of Juſtice and Charity,

Your humble Servant,

T. M.

Marlborough, *May*, 1722.

Marlborough,
May 1722.

A

POSTSCRIPT

TO

Enthuſiaſm in Diſtreſs.

OCCASIONED

By a Pamphlet, intitled, *Comprehenſion more properly than Enthuſiaſm in Diſtreſs:* Said to be written by one Mr. PETER NISBET, in Defence of *Phileleutherus Britannicus.*

A

POSTSCRIPT

TO

Embarfm in Diſtreſs.

IN a Pamphlet, intitled, Compre-



Said to be written by De-

A POSTSCRIPT TO *Enthuſiaſm in Diſtreſs.*

UPON my publiſhing the Letter to *Philelutherus Britannicus*, occaſion'd by his *Reflections upon Reaſon*, the learned Gentleman who had taken that Name, endeavoured at firſt to perſuade the People, that what I had offered againſt him was of no Conſequence; that as ſuch it ought to be ſlighted; and that he, for his own Part, had other Fiſh to fry, and did not intend to trouble his Head at all about it. But when he found the popular Torrent bear too ſtrong upon him; and that People of all Perſuaſions generally ran into the Opinion, that he had ſome other Reaſon for not defending himſelf, than what he aſſign'd; and that

that the true Reaſon was not proper to be given: This ſeem'd to provoke him into a Reſolution of undeceiving the World in a Matter which ſo nearly concern'd his Character, as an able learned Man. And now his moſt intimate Friends freely opened themſelves in Converſation upon it, declaring, that the Author of the *Reflections, &c.* had determin'd upon a *Reply*; that a *ſtinging one* was gone to the Preſs; that he would clearly evince how much I had been miſtaken in my Adverſary; and make a publick Example of me, for the Weakneſs and Preſumption of attacking him.

But it ſoon appear'd, that the learned Author had taken Wit again in his Anger: For having been convinced by ſome of the ableſt of his Friends in *London*, whom he had conſulted about it, that both his *own Reputation*, and the *Intereſt of Truth*, requir'd his Silence; he reſumes his Reſolution as ſtrong as ever, to keep himſelf on the ſafeſt Side, and to make ſure of ſaying nothing amiſs, by ſaying nothing at all. Here then is our learned Author's *Prudence*; and no doubt but he is infallibly in the right, that the *Truth* is beſt ſecur'd, by reſolving not to defend it.

I ſhall not enter upon the Detail of this Gentleman's private Management. I envy him not the Honour he gains, by ſhuffling up and down, among truſty Friends, a ſtill-born Production of his own, fill'd with bitter Revilings, and the moſt groſs Miſrepreſentations, which he dares not expoſe to publick View. Nor ſhall I preſume to ſay, how many Letters he has receiv'd from Gentlemen of the moſt eſtabliſh'd Reputation for Learning and Piety, with Thanks

and

and Compliments for his Performance; or how ſecure he is in the good Opinion of himſelf, upon their *Authority* and his *own*. Theſe, and ſuch like Shifts, to ſave the Credit of a *dying Author*, may afford Matter of Speculation and Diſcourſe at *Marlborough*; but it does not at all concern the reſt of the World, who ought not therefore to be troubled with it.

No ſooner had the *Author* of the *Reflections* reſolved to give up the *Ghoſt*, but out comes a printed Letter, directed to me, as from one Mr. *Peter Nisbet* of *Briſtol*. Whether there be any ſuch Perſon in Being or no, I cannot tell, nor am I at all concerned to enquire; my Buſineſs is only to conſider, what the Author of the Letter has ſaid to the Purpoſe, and whether he has indeed ſaved the Honour of his deceaſed Friend by an handſome Funeral. A decent Interment is ſuppoſed to be the leaſt Reſpect a Man can pay to a dead Friend: But, in my Opinion, Mr. *Nisbet* has been merry quite out of Time and Place: Such Airs are not ſo proper for a Houſe of Mourning; and inſtead of being ſo gay, it would perhaps have been more ſuitable to the Occaſion, if he had ſeriouſly bethought himſelf, that his *own Turn* might come next. Mr. *Nisbet* ought to have been very ſerious at ſuch a Solemnity, and not have turned his Friend's Obſequies into a Theatrical Piece of Mockery. But let us ſee how he behaves upon this Occaſion.

And here the firſt Thing he introduces, is a certain Engine, contrived by the late Author, to preſerve the World from the Flames, and prevent a general Conflagration. With this Engine, as he pretends, his Friend might have done

done great Service, if I could but have let him gone on with it, and had not disturbed him and his good Workmen, while they were playing it. But what does Mr. *Nisbet* mean by this? Does he think we are come to a Funeral, to be entertain'd after this idle ridiculous manner? Has it not been prov'd, that these Flames are only imaginary? And besides, that the Engine was a mere Whim, so slightly put together, that it would not hold Water; and therefore could have been of no Use, supposing the Danger to have been real: You know very well, that your Friend, though a good Man, was now and then a little whimsical; he would laugh and cry in the same Breath: This Minute he would be extremely merry, and presently throw himself into a great Rage upon a Matter of no Moment: Sometimes he would make his Bows and Compliments to the good old Gentleman *Reason*, and tell him, that he was a great Prince, and ought to govern the World; and soon after, he would fall into strange Fits at the bare Sight or Name of *Reason*, and cry out, the *Spirit*, the *Spirit!* O that carnal Devil, *Reason!*

From these odd Symptoms People began to suspect, that if he had lived longer he must have run quite beside himself. This is no Secret; 'tis well known to the whole Neighbourhood, and to every one of us, who now, upon your Invitation, attend his Funeral. And therefore pray, Mr. *Nisbet*, call another Cause, and talk no more of the *Engine*.

Mr. *Nisbet*, in the next Place, falls into an odd Train of Disorders, partly *Hypocondriacal*, and partly *Malignant*, upon the Sound of that start-

ſtartling dreadful Word *Comprehenſion.* This Stimulus has contracted all his Nerves; and the Spaſm ſeizing him while he was laughing, 'tis wonderful to obſerve what a Figure he makes: for though he ſtill endeavours to laugh, and ſtrives to put on a merry Countenance, yet every one muſt ſee, that 'tis mere Affectation and Grimace; ſince he diſcovers the evident Symptoms of a Plague in the Bowels, and is plainly tormented with all the Gripes of *Intereſt* and *worldly Power.* Perhaps the Eaſing of his Mind upon this Head, might be one chief Cauſe of his inviting me to this Entertainment; and ſince I have been the Occaſion of throwing the Gentleman into this Diſorder, it concerns me to give him all reaſonable Satisfaction.

I had maintain'd againſt his Friend, that nothing ought to be inſiſted on as neceſſary to Chriſtian Peace, Unity, and Church Communion, but what the Scripture it ſelf has made neceſſary to theſe Ends; and that to exclude Men from the Communion of the Church, and the Benefits of the Chriſtian Covenant, on the Account of any Thing, for which Chriſt himſelf has not, or will not, in the laſt Day exclude them from the Kingdom of Heaven; that this, I ſay, is a bold preſumptuous Uſurpation of Chriſt's Authority, an exerciſing a ſpiritual Tyranny over the Conſciences of Men, and the Ground of all the Enmities, Church-Diviſions, and Party-Rage, in the Chriſtian World. Here Mr. *Nisbet* has been ſo far from confuting any Thing I have ſaid upon this Principle, that he has not ſo much as mention'd it. *Church Communion*, upon *Scripture Terms*, is the very Thing that he fears; he cannot bear the

Thought;

Thought; this is the Thing at which his Soul trembles. But let us only ſuppoſe the Thing as poſſible; let us ſuppoſe that *Comprehenſion* ſhould ſome Time or other take Place, and Chriſtians come to be better united, than they hitherto have been, upon a Scripture Foot; what then? What then! Why then the Lord have Mercy upon us! for this muſt make *Oaths, Canons, Articles, and Rubricks, as much old Almanacks as the Covenant; that henceforward, as the Churches fall void, a Quaker may get one, an Arian another, and ſo on, with the like Privilege to every new Sect a fruitful Age may produce: A Deſign,* it ſeems, *which never had its Parallel ſince the Times of* Julian *the Apoſtate*, p. 8.

If I thought him capable of giving a ſober Anſwer under ſuch a Fright, I ſhould here ask him, whether his *Canons, Articles,* and *Rubricks,* are neceſſary Rules of Chriſtian Faith and Practice? or whether the Holy Scripture, without *Theſe,* is not the *only Rule,* and a *ſufficient Rule* of Chriſtian Faith and Practice? To ſay, that the Scripture is the only Rule, and a ſufficient Rule; and yet that there are *other Rules,* without which the Scripture cannot be ſufficient; is affronting the Underſtandings of Men, and a moſt ridiculous Banter upon Common Senſe. And ſhould a Man ſay this, and yet at the ſame Time pretend a mighty Zeal againſt *Popery, Jeſuitiſm,* and Emiſſaries from *Rome*; it muſt be ſuch a Complication of *Abſurdity* and *Impudence,* as cannot be parallel'd even in *Julian* himſelf. Mr. *Nisbet* is mightily concern'd to guard the Church againſt Error and Hereſy; and hence it is, that he ſeems ſo fond of *Oaths*: Whereas he ought to conſider, that all the Oaths and Subſcriptions

ſcriptions in the World, can ſerve only to keep out honeſt conſciencious Men, but cannot poſſibly keep out thoſe who will profeſs, ſubſcribe, and ſwear any Thing, for their own *Intereſt*; and, if I am not much miſtaken, *theſe* are the worſt and moſt dangerous *Hereticks* of all. Oaths can be no more a Teſt againſt *Hereſy*, than againſt *Jacobitiſm*; and of how little Conſequence they are in this laſt Caſe, every Body knows. I cannot imagine therefore, why he has here tack'd *Oaths* to *Canons*, *Articles*, *&c.* unleſs he thinks that his human infallible Standards of Chriſtian Faith and Practice ought to be continu'd, if it was only for the mere ſake of *Swearing*. I beg his Pardon for this Freedom; I hope it will not ruffle his Conſcience, or put him out of his good Humour.

But the greateſt Jeſt of all is, Mr. *Nisbet's* ſeeming Concern for the *good People*, and the miſerable Shifts to which he ſuppoſes they muſt be reduc'd, if the Inſtitutions of *Chriſt* ſhould ever take Place, inſtead of the Inſtitutions of *Men*. Upon this Occaſion he turns the People out of their Churches, and directs them to the Meeting-Houſes; and ſends a poor honeſt Man up and down on a ſleeveleſs Errand, from one Pariſh to another, to get his Child baptiz'd, and brings him home at laſt diſappointed, as finding a *Quaker* in one Church, an *Anabaptiſt* in another, *&c.* and all this he pretends as the neceſſary Conſequence of exchanging human *Creeds* and *Canons* for the *Bible*. 'Tis evident that he is here maintaining the ſecular excluſive *Intereſts* of his own *Clergy*, while he pretends to be concerned for the religious *Rights* and *Liberties* of the *Chriſtian People*. No doubt but the *Clergy*,

ſo far as they are *Civil Officers*, and expect their Pay from the *Crown*, muſt conform themſelves, in Matters of *Religion*, to the *Civil Law*. I have never diſputed this, nor pretended to direct the Magiſtrate about the making or repealing of any Civil Laws in Matters of Religion; and therefore, if this Gentleman has miſtaken me here, the Blame muſt lie at his Door, and not at mine. But then this has no manner of Relation at all to the Conſtitution of Chriſtian Churches, or the Terms of Chriſtian Unity and Communion, as laid down in Scripture, and ſettled by Chriſt and the Apoſtles. Theſe Matters depend intirely upon divine Inſtitutions and Sanctions, which no human Authority, or Civil Power in the World, can any ways ſuperſede or alter. Let us ſuppoſe, then, the Perſon legally preſented and inducted to a particular Pariſh, and who hereupon takes Poſſeſſion of the Church, and has a legal Right to the Tithes; let us ſuppoſe him, I ſay, not to be a *Quaker*, an *Anabaptiſt*, or an *Arian*, but in Truth and Reality a Man of no Religion at all, who gives ſufficient Proofs that he neither fears God nor regards Man, and who is to all Intents and Purpoſes an *Atheiſt*: Now I would ask here, does this legal Preſentation and Induction give the Man any ſpiritual Juriſdiction in the Pariſh, or oblige the People to intruſt him with the Care of their Souls? To ſay this, would be as contrary to the Law of Nature, and to the Law of Chriſt, as it is to the Law of *England*; and therefore, the People in this Caſe being at full Liberty, by all the Right and Law in the World, muſt be indiſpenſibly bound to make the beſt Proviſion they can for their

their own Souls, by chuſing a fit Perſon for that Purpoſe, juſt after the ſame Manner as if there had been no ſuch Thing as an Impropriation of Tithes to any particular Uſe at all. And here the Perſon aforeſaid could not think himſelf aggrieved in being diſcharged from the Care and Trouble of *feeding* the *Flock*, ſince he would ſtill have the Right and Liberty of *fleecing them*. The former he is ſuppoſed either to have no Capacity for, or no Inclination to; and therefore the latter, which is what he aims at, muſt needs content him.

Thus is all Mr. *Nisbet's* Concern for the good People founded upon the ſecular Intereſt of the Hierarchy; and upon this Suppoſition, that a *Chriſtian Man* has not as much Right to take Care of his *Soul*, as he has of his *Horſe*, while he can chuſe his *Farrier*, but not his *Paſtor*.

If this Gentleman has frighted himſelf with any ſuch ſort of Comprehenſion as was never aim'd at, or contended for, by me, I cannot help it. 'Tis well known that what I have argued for againſt his Friend, and all along in other Writings, is this, That the Holy Scripture alone is the only Rule of Chriſtian Faith and Practice, the only Teſt of religious Orthodoxy, and the only Centre of Chriſtian Unity; that to ſet up any mere human Teſts and Standards of religious Faith and Practice, is in Effect to lay aſide the Scriptures, for the ſake of a more *intelligible*, *clear*, and *certain* Rule; that this has been the great Engine of carnal Intereſt, Church-Tyranny, Perſecution, and Party-Rage, in all Ages; that theſe Teſts and human Deciſions have always been more dark and doubtful than the Scripture it ſelf, which they pretend to li-

mit and explain; and that this must necessarily eternize our Divisions, and propagate the Flames and Animosities of the Christian Church and World *in infinitum*.

Now to pretend, as Mr. *Nisbet* does in his Letter, that this Principle and way of Talking are Jesuitical; and that if People are once driven from their human Creeds and Tests of Orthodoxy, they can have no other Refuge but to betake themselves to *Rome* for a Decision: This, I say, is so vain and groundless a Pretence, so much unlike a Gentleman, a Scholar, or a Christian, and visibly contains in it so mean a Piece of Ill-nature, that I do not envy him the Favour and good Opinion of those who can be weak and unthinking enough to be influenced by it. If the Scripture be not sufficiently *clear*, *definitive*, and *express*, in every Thing necessary to *Salvation* and *Christian Communion*, to what End is it pretended as a *sufficient* Rule of Christian *Faith* and *Practice*? And if *other Rules* are *necessary*, why is this declared to be the *only Rule*? Let Mr. *Nisbet* and his Friends tell us plainly, whether they are *Protestants* or not, and this Controversy will be at an End. If he does not believe the Scripture to be a sufficient Rule, and the only Rule of a Christian's Faith and Practice, as I have consider'd and explain'd it; let him show me how he can defend himself against the *Papists* upon any other Principle, and I will admire his Skill, submit to his Authority, and become his Disciple: But if he cannot do this, I hope he will not for the future argue against any Thing that is necessary to make us rationally consistent with our selves.

Upon

Upon my ſaying, that the Church, as a tender *Mother*, ought to a take a prudent Care of all her Children; and not nouriſh the ſtrong and healthy only, and caſt the weak and ſickly away, or leave them to periſh, becauſe they cannot feed as the ſtrong and healthy do; Mr. *Nisbet* thus merrily replies: "No, God forbid! "*Sir*: Only, if you pleaſe, inſtead of *Mother*, "for once we'll take *Father*; whoſe Olive "Branches running much on the Female Kind, "he obſerves ſome of the younger Fry look "pale, and off their Stomacks; and, upon "Enquiry, finds they eat Salt, and any Traſh "they can come at; nor do the Sluts deny it, "but clinging about, cry, Indeed, Papa, we "do eat as you ſay, but we love it, and it goes "down good; when Meat makes us ſick, 'till "we puke again. Now, pray, what ſhall this "Man do? Shall he let 'em eat on 'till it kills or "cripples 'em, as one or t'other it rarely fails "of? Or reſtrain 'em what he can, 'till a Phyſician, with proper Remedies, has ſo re-"cover'd their former Appetites, that they eat, "and look like the reſt? Your Opinion, *Sir*, "as a Man of Senſe and Sincerity, and (as I "am told) a little Piece of a Phyſician too, "which of theſe two Childiſh Alluſions think "you moſt *a propos*? p. 14, 15". Mr. *Nisbet*'s Wit here is very pretty; and I have given this as a Specimen of his *innocent Mirth*, to let the Reader ſee with what perfect Eaſe, and entire Satisfaction, he can make himſelf ridiculous. I will not diſpute with him, whether the Church be a *Mother* or a *Father*: The former has been generally allow'd; but ſince he will now have it otherwiſe, let it be *Father Church* for

the preſent: And then it is plain, that in this Compariſon, as he has put it, all Diſſenters are repreſented as this *Father Church's* young green-ſick Girls; who, being in their Non-age, and wanting a Judgment of Diſcretion, when they would eat any Thing hurtful, muſt be reſtrain'd by *Paternal*, i. e. *Church* Authority.

When *Authority* has once turned a Man's *Head*, and his Imagination has been well heated with the Pleaſure and Advantages of *Dominion*, it is wonderful to obſerve how he will diſtort and pervert every Thing that comes in his Way; and be continually diſcovering the Cauſe of his *Diſorder*, even while he is endeavouring to conceal it. The Queſtion here was about *Things indifferent*, which by human Injunctions are made *neceſſary*, and inſeparably tack'd to the Inſtitutions of Chriſt; but he carries the Caſe quite out of the Way, and applies it to Things in themſelves *hurtful* or *ſinful*, and ſuppoſes the Perſons concerned, to take that which, if not prevented by due Reſtraints and proper Remedies, muſt certainly prove *mortal*, that is, as his Compariſon muſt conclude, *damnable*: Whereas he cannot but know that this is not the Queſtion; my Argument had no Relation to it, nor is there any ſuch Thing in Diſpute.

Again, the Perſons refer'd to, as capable of Church-Communion, were ſuch as muſt be allow'd a Judgment of Diſcretion to act and determine for themſelves; but this Author turns it off to Children in a literal Senſe, who muſt be kept under the Awe and Influence of Paternal Authority, 'till they come to Years of Diſcretion, and are capable of a rational *Self-Conduct*.

duct. And thus where he could ſay nothing to the Purpoſe, he thought it much like a Gentleman and a Scholar, to be very gay, and very impertinent. To my asking, Why any Thing that is not neceſſary, ſhould be inſeparably tack'd to a divine Inſtitution; as for Inſtance, why People muſt be deny'd Baptiſm for their Children, if they cannot be ſatisfy'd of the Lawfulneſs of that human ſignificant Sign of the Croſs? Mr. *Nisbet* has nothing to ſay, but by pretending a particular Exception to the general Rule, in the Caſe of private Baptiſm, where the Time and Circumſtances are ſuppoſed not to admit of it: but as it happens, I have ſaid nothing to exclude this Exception, ſuppoſing it was an Exception to the general Rule.

I did not aſſert that the Croſs is inſeparably and *univerſally*, without Exception, tack'd to a divine Inſtitution: but ſtill I ſuppoſe it is *inſeparably* tack'd to a *divine Inſtitution* in all thoſe Caſes where Baptiſm cannot be had without it; and this I am ſure is in all ordinary *Caſes*. Beſides, 'tis plain, that in the extraordinary Caſe of private Baptiſm, this Signing is not diſpenſed with, but only for the Time, and upon the preſent Exigence, 'till there be a proper Opportunity for it. And upon this Principle, it might be ſaid, that Baptiſm it ſelf is diſpenſed with, or not made neceſſary in ſome Caſes; ſince, methinks, no Body ſhould ſay that 'tis neceſſary, where it cannot poſſibly be had.

I may now leave it with the Reader to conſider, whether the Croſs in Baptiſm be not, according to the Senſe and Judgment of the Church, inſeparably tack'd to a divine Inſtitution; and whether there was any Thing of

Abſurdity or Falſhood in what I had ſaid concerning it.

But Mr. *Nisbet* tells me, *p.* 16, that this was *a much greater Blunder in me*, not to ſay *downright Falſhood*, than it was in the Author of the *Reflections* to declare, that the Scripture *aſſerts* Three *in Perſon*, and but One in *Eſſence*. Any *candid Reader*, he ſays, would have underſtood it, that by *Aſſertion*, he meant only *neceſſary Inference*. And any well-meaning, unwary Reader, who had confided in the Author, muſt, I ſuppoſe, have underſtood it, that this was a Scripture Doctrine *expreſsly*, and in *Terms*; and that thoſe who doubt of it, muſt deny the moſt plain expreſs Texts of Scripture. I cannot think, that the Author did not know the Difference between *Aſſertion* and *Inference*, or that this was a mere Slip or Overſight in him.

But why muſt a candid Reader by the Word *Aſſertion*, underſtand *Inference?* At this Rate, any Party-Zealot, of what Opinion or Perſwaſion, ſoever, might eaſily make the Scripture *aſſert* whatever he pleaſes; for 'tis but to call his *own Aſſertion*, a *Scripture Aſſertion*, or a *neceſſary Inference* from plain Texts, and the Buſineſs is done.

This Gentleman's Inſinuation, that the *true Church*, in all Ages, has been agreed upon this Point, in Senſe as well as Sound, is a moſt vain and groundleſs Pretence. If we may take the Senſe of the Church, from the Writings of the moſt learned *Athanaſians*, who for ſeveral Ages paſt have engroſs'd to themſelves the *Reputation* and Advantages of Orthodoxy, 'tis plain that they have never been agreed upon this Point, and that they are as much divided,

and

and differ as widely, at this Day as ever. Some take the Word *God* as a perſonal proper Name, for the one unoriginate, independent, *firſt Cauſe*, and *Author* of all Things; and by the Word *Perſon*, they mean only a particular *Mode*, *Attribute*, or Manner of *Subſiſtence* in the one divine *Subſtance*. Others underſtand the Word *God*, as ſignifying an abſtract *Eſſence*, *Species*, or *ſort* of Things; and by *Three Perſons*, they underſtand three real, ſubſtantial, and diſtinct *Individuals*, of the ſame *Nature* and *Kind*, *i. e.* three equally ſupreme, independent, *firſt Cauſes*, *Creators*, and *Governours* of the Univerſe; and this has been profeſſedly declared and contended for by ſome *Orthodox Writers*.

But the more artful Managers, being aware that both theſe muſt be *Hereſy*, continually play at faſt and looſe between them both, and fly from one Extreme to the other, juſt as Neceſſity drives them, and as the Exigence of the Caſe requires; while no Man has ever yet fix'd or ſettled any poſſible, conſiſtent, or intelligible Medium between *Sabellianiſm* and *Tritheiſm* upon *Athanaſian* Principles. 'Till thoſe Gentlemen therefore have better acquitted themſelves, and cleared their own Character in this *Point*, they can never be thought *good Evidence* in any Court of Juſtice againſt *Hereticks*. 'Tis impoſſible to determine from any Thing the Author of the *Reflections*, &c. has ſaid, which Side he takes, or whether he underſtands his *own Aſſertion* in any Senſe at all, or not; and Mr. *Nisbet* has taken great Care not to leave *himſelf* accountable for any Opinion of his own in this Caſe. His implicit Faith in the Church, concerning an Article which the Church has never

never defined or explain'd, may prove him perhaps a good *Churchman*; which he may be in *one Senſe*, whether he makes any Uſe of his *own Reaſon*, or not.

Upon my ſaying, that whatever the Separation be between the Conformiſts and Non-Conformiſts, it is certainly mutual, and that they both equally and alike ſeparate from one another; this Gentleman's Temper is much ruffled, and diſcovers a ſort of Diſorder, which ſeems to be hereditary to him, and leaves but little or no Hopes of a Cure. For here Mr. *Nisbet* falls to talking of a great many broken incoherent Things, concerning the *Kirk of Scotland*, *King James*, certain Books written in *that Reign* againſt the *Church of Rome*, and a Pamphlet coming out about that Time by a *diſguiſed Papiſt*, and pretending there could be no Centre of Unity, but by ſubmitting to the *Authority of the Pope*, &c. All which are as much to the Purpoſe, as if he had went off from the Matter in Hand to the *World in the Moon*. Does he deny, that the Separation between the Conformiſts and Non-Conformiſts is mutual? Or has he offered any Thing in Proof of the contrary? Not at all. But the great Grievance is, my ſaying, that *the Church has ſworn away all Authority to the Crown*: And is not this Matter of Fact? Is it not undeniably plain, and does not every Body know it? Yes, that's true; but I muſt not think to come off ſo; for my ſaying this, *looks too like a premeditated Stroke at the* Supremacy, *and a denying the Magiſtrate the Power which* this Gentleman and his Friends *allow him*.

But

But all this is mere Affectation and Grimace: Mr. *Nisbet* underſtands me better than he pretends; and I am ſorry, for his ſake, that he ſhould have given me this Occaſion of explaining my ſelf farther to him. He knows very well, that I diſclaim for my ſelf and Friends all Authority and Juriſdiction, but what is lodged in the Hands of the Civil Magiſtrate; and therefore we may take the Oaths to the King upon Principle, with good Conſciences, and without Repentance. I did not blame the Church for taking the Oaths, and inveſting his Majeſty with all *Authority*, both *Eccleſiaſtical* and *Civil*; but only thoſe *Church-Men*, that do this againſt their Principles; who give with one Hand, and re-aſſume with the other; who are continually claiming and purſuing an Authority, which they have ſworn away; who take the Oaths, and then banter them, pretend to waſh them down with a Glaſs of Wine, and quote *Hudibras* to juſtify their Perjury.

'Tis well known, that there is a *Party* in the *Church*, who would be thought the only *true Church-Men*, that claim an Authority and Juriſdiction from Chriſt himſelf, and yet ſwear away that *very Authority* to the *Crown*, and lay themſelves under a *Præmunire*, if they ſhould dare to act upon their own Principles, in diſcharging that Truſt, which they pretend to hold by divine Right, and independent on any human Authority whatſoever. For this I appeal to all the Books and Writings of the High-flying Authoritative *Church-Men*, which are fill'd with loud Complaints, and bitter Invectives upon this very Score. And that theſe Gentlemen are not ſatisfy'd with the Oaths, or

eaſy

eaſy under their preſent Circumſtances; if there were need of any freſh Proof, I preſume the late Conſpiracy, now under the Conſideration of the Parliament, will afford us ſufficient Evidence. But, perhaps, Mr. *Nisbet* will ſay, that all this is nothing to him; he is very well ſatisfy'd with the Oaths, and has no Hand in the Plot. This may be true enough; I have ſaid nothing againſt it; but then he muſt give me leave to reply upon him in his own Words, *That good Wits are apt to jump; and that Eggs are Eggs in all Ages and Countries; and where Men are acted by the ſame Principles, they will always be known by their Fruits.*

Mr. *Nisbet*, in the next Place, proceeds to ſupport his *Friend*, and the Two *Univerſities*, upon the Credit of this Axiom, That *Nothing* is in the *Underſtanding*, *but what was firſt* in the *Senſe or Senſory*; *Nihil eſt in Intellectu, quod non prius fuit in Senſu.* Mr. *Nisbet*, having juſt mention'd this Axiom, and made it a civil Compliment or Two, preſently marches off, and leaves it, with his Friend, in the Lurch, as having a Buſineſs of greater Importance upon his Hands. And here he goes on for Two whole Pages, in proving, that a *blind* Man cannot *ſee*, nor a *deaf* Man *hear*; and that a Man born *blind* and *deaf*, cannot perform any of thoſe Offices and Operations which neceſſarily depend upon *theſe Senſes*. This is no News; the Gentleman is doubtleſs in the right; and it would be great Obſtinacy, and very unconſcionable in me, to deny this. But what does he infer from hence? Why, that abſtracting from the Mediation and Inſtrumentality of the organical Senſes, the Soul, or *Mind*, muſt be perfectly

fectly quieſcent, and remain, for the Time, without any Power of Thinking or Acting at all.

But this Concluſion of his has the ill Luck to be attended with two ſmall *Inconveniencies:* for, in the firſt Place, it is not true; and, in the next Place, 'tis nothing at all to the *Purpoſe*; either with reſpect to the *Senſe*, *Uſe*, and *Application* of the *Axiom* in the *Ariſtotelian Philoſophy*, or the *Deſign* of his Friend in producing it.

I grant, that where all Communication by the organical Senſes ſhould be cut off, the *Soul*, in that caſe, could not act upon the *Body*, nor be acted upon by *it*, or give any ſenſible Proof of its Union and real Preſence. Yet ſtill, while it is ſuppoſed really to exiſt, as a rational, intelligent, ſelf-determining Agent; it muſt be allow'd a Power of reflecting upon its own real Exiſtence, upon the Exiſtence of a firſt independent *Cauſe*, and of forming all thoſe Ideas which concern the natural or moral Relation of ſuch a *Cauſe* to its *Effects*. To deny this, is to all Intents and Purpoſes a denying the real Exiſtence of the *Soul*, as diſtinct from the *Body*; a ſubjecting all the Powers and Operations of the *Mind* to the Laws of *Mechaniſm*; and a ſuppoſing Thoughts and Ideas to be nothing elſe, but the different *Modifications*, or at leaſt the neceſſary Phyſical *Effects* of *Matter* and *Motion*. But whatever an *Ariſtotelian* or a *Materialiſt* might ſay, one would think a Chriſtian *Philoſopher* and *Divine* ſhould not maintain this, without reflecting upon its Conſequences.

As this Principle therefore is falſe, and muſt terminate in *Materialiſm*; ſo I ſhall now ſhew, that 'tis nothing to the purpoſe, ſuppoſing it

true,

true, and that Mr. *Nisbet* has not at all ſerved the Cauſe of his Friend by it.

The *Ariſtotelian* Doctrine, concerning the ſenſible and intelligible Species of Things, is well known to the Learned; and, I believe, no Body, who has conſidered the Matter, can doubt but the preſent Axiom was laid down by them as the Ground and firſt Principle of this Part of their Philoſophy. Now theſe Philoſophers teach us, that external Objects, by certain determinate Impreſſions upon the material organical Syſtem, produce the ſenſible Species, *i. e.* the Senſations of Things; of which Senſation, thus produced, they ſuppoſe the material Organ *it ſelf* to be the proper *Subject*. All this being granted, without Proof; they next proceed to tell us, that theſe ſenſible Species, or Senſations, being convey'd by their proper and reſpective Organs into the *Senſus communis*, and being there receiv'd as a common Baſon, or *Receptaculum Chyli*, they are from thence conducted in one continued Channel, and emptied into the Underſtanding; where making their Impreſſions like a Seal upon Wax, they become *Intelligible*, and by an incomprehenſible Chymiſtry are converted into Rational Notions and Perceptions.

If Mr. *Nisbet* does not think this to be a fair Account of the *Ariſtotelian* Doctrine in this Caſe, he is at liberty to make a better Senſe of it, if he can; but, I think, this is plainly what they aim at, ſo far as 'tis capable of being explain'd at all. However it be, I muſt do the Author of the *Reflections* the Juſtice to own, that he ſeems to me not much to have miſtaken the Senſe of the *Ariſtotelian* Philoſophers in this Axiom;

Axiom; and could he have made good the Axiom it ſelf, he muſt have carried his Point ſo far, as to have prov'd two diſtinct Subjects of Senſations, Ideas, and Perceptions in Man; namely, the material Organical *Syſtem*, and the Rational *Soul*: tho' he might, perhaps, have miſcarried in what he ſaid afterwards about the Super-rational Spirit. But Mr. *Nisbet*, in giving the Axiom another Meaning, and turning it off to quite a different Queſtion, has very much diſſerved his *Friend*, as well as the *Truth*; and would here repreſent him as advancing a *Principle*, in order to prove *Something*, which, if granted him, could have been *Nothing* at all to his *purpoſe*.

But in oppoſition to this Part of the *Peripatetick* Philoſophy, beſides what I have already ſaid in overthrowing the Author's Principles, it might be eaſily demonſtrated from the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing, that Matter cannot poſſibly Think; and that there is but one only Subject of Senſation, Thought and Intelligence in Man, which is the *Soul* or *Mind* it ſelf. For which, to avoid Prolixity here, I refer the curious or learned Reader to what Dr. *Clark* has written againſt Mr. *Dodwell* upon this Head, and to what Mr. *Ditton* has farther demonſtrated in the *Appendix* to his Book of the *Reſurrection*: Which Authors I refer to, not to determine any thing by their Authority, but only to let the Reader know where he may find the Demonſtration, as I would refer to *Euclid* in a like Caſe. But for the ſake of thoſe, who may not be ſo capable of ſuch abſtract Reaſonings, I muſt here obſerve farther, that the ſame Thing is undeniably confirm'd by Experience likewiſe,

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in every one who has had the Misfortune to loſe a Leg, or an Arm; who plainly feel, and perceive the ſame Senſations in the ſame Part after, as they did before the Amputation; and did they not reaſon about it, and were not convinc'd by other Experience of their Loſs, could not know by any different Senſation, or the want of any Feeling in the Part it ſelf, that they had indeed loſt it. Which is an evident Proof, that theſe *ſenſible Species* or *Senſations* are not ſubjected in the material Syſtem, or corporeal Subſtance it ſelf, but in a quite different Subject; that is, in the *Soul*.

Mr. *Nisbet* ſeems to have been under great Pain and Difficulty to determine, in what gentle manner he ſhould touch upon the *Super-rational Spirit*. He has neither advanc'd any Thing new in Favour of his Friend, nor reply'd to any Thing that I had urged againſt him on this Occaſion; but he tells me, that he takes the Queſtion to be properly this, Whether barely a Whim of the Author's, or otherwiſe of long ſtanding, and only put into a modern Dreſs? And he thinks, that the vigorous Aſſaults I have made againſt it, are manifeſtly owing to a ſettled Prejudice and Spite againſt *Antiquity*.

But I can aſſure him, that he is much miſtaken, and that I have no Prejudice at all againſt *Antiquity*. I can readily allow the Ancients their proper Place and Office, as the moſt credible capable *Witneſſes* of what was ſaid and done in their Time; but not as Judges of *Truth* or Deciders of *Controverſy*. I can ſubmit to their *Teſtimony* in Matters of *Fact*, where they are clear and conſiſtent with themſelves; but not

to their Umpirage and Arbitration in Matters of *Reaſon* and *Revelation*. The Ancients might as well be miſtaken, were as much divided among themſelves, and maintain'd as many idle abſurd and ridiculous Things, as any of their Succeſſors have ſince done; and therefore I pay no more regard to their Judgment, than to any modern Judgment equally fallible. And indeed, this ſlaviſh Subjection of the Mind to the Opinions of others; this Canonical Method of *Voting* for *Truth*, and proving it by *Suffrage*; is fit for none but *Common-Place* Men, and ſuch *Retailers* of Knowledge, as deal only upon *Truſt*, and never concern themſelves to examine Matters ſo far, as to make any *Opinion* properly their own. This, I know, has ſometimes paſs'd for *Learning*, and been taken as the Mark and Characteriſtick of a *Scholar*; but yet 'tis only ſuch a *ſort* of Learning, as an *Idiot* might attain by the bare Force of Memory, without *Reaſon* or *Judgment*. But to proceed: The Queſtion about the *Super-rational Spirit*, as Mr. *Nisbet* would now have it put, is perfectly ridiculous; Whether it was a *Whim* of the Author's own, or whether ſome other People had not had the ſame *Whim* in their Heads before him? For the Author did not barely quote it as the *Opinion* of *others*, but he eſpouſed it as his *own*. He laboured to eſtabliſh it upon the Principles of *Reaſon* and *Scripture*, as a Thing of ſuch Conſequence, that the Chriſtian Faith could not ſubſiſt without it, and as abſolutely neceſſary to the obtaining our *ſupreme Felicity*, and the keeping up an Intercourſe and Correſpondence with the *ſpiritual inviſible World*. I think therefore, that he has nothing to complain of, and

that I acted right in taking him upon his own Principles, and shewing that there was no such rational or scriptural Evidence for it as he pretended, and that both *these Principles* were plainly against him.

There is one very unfair and unchristian Insinuation, that Mr. *Nisbet* has made up and down in his Book, as if I had intended artfully to favour the Cause of Deism, and to wound Christianity it self through the Author's Sides. I therefore declare, that I expect to appear before the *Judgment-Seat of Christ*, and to be accountable for what I have said and done, as much as Mr. *Nisbet*, or the Author of the *Reflections, &c.* I firmly *believed*, and think I have *proved*, that the Author's *Principles* are *absurd, unintelligible*, and *self-contradictory*; that they must give the *Deists* all the Advantage in the World against Christianity; and that the Christian Doctrines cannot possibly subsist upon *them*.

Whether I have sufficiently proved this or no, must be submitted to the Judgment of the Publick, upon the Merits of what has been said, unless the Author, or some Body for him, should demand farther Satisfaction; and in that Case, I promise either to defend *my self*, or to give up the *Cause*.

And now it must be left to every Man's Judgment, whether this Gentleman has not quite given up his Friend under the most considerable Difficulties, and made the Matter rather worse than better, as to these Points which he has so slightly touch'd upon. The Author's self-contradictory *Account* of the Christian Doctrines, that they are intelligible and unintelligible, comprehensible and incomprehensible, very

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plain and eaſy, and yet very dark and intricate, and all this in Things neceſſary to Salvation, is *ſilently dropt:* His Charge againſt all Diſſenters, without Exception, as Schiſmaticks; that their Sin is as great and inexcuſable as *Treaſon* or *Horſe-ſtealing*, and as evident as that a Triangle has *Three Sides* as well as *Three Corners*, is now *huſhed up:* His unrighteous Charge againſt a Right Reverend Prelate of the Church, and his Lordſhip's Friends and Admirers, is decently *laid to Sleep:* His great *Principle*, that the *rational Aſſent* of the Mind may be carry'd beyond the *Perception* of the *Underſtanding*, is left in the Grave with the Author: And what is ſtill worſe, if worſe can be, he is ſuffered to to ſink under the Weight of the *Super-rational Spirit*, and not a Word to be ſaid by any *rational Soul* to ſupport him. To conclude: I doubt not but Mr. *Nisbet* can talk more to the Purpoſe upon other Occaſions, than he has done, or could do, in this Letter. He had undertaken an hard Task; he was reſolved to ſay ſomething for the ſake of a *Friend*, in Defence of a Book which he knew could not be defended.

A

SECOND POSTSCRIPT

TO

Enthuſiaſm in Diſtreſs.

Occaſioned by

Mr. NISBETT's Second Letter,

INTITLED,

Comprehenſion Confuſion.

Addreſs'd to Mr. NISBETT,

A

SECOND POSTSCRIPT

TO

Enthusiasm in Difficulties.

Occasioned by

Mr. NISBETT's Second Letter,

INTITLED,

Comprehension Confusion.

Address'd to Mr. NISBETT.

A

SECOND POSTSCRIPT TO *Enthusiasm in Distress.*

Address'd to Mr. NISBETT.

SIR,

I Have just now received the Second Letter, with which you have honoured me from the Press, in Defence of your good Friend, the Author of the *Reflections upon Reason*; for which I find my self obliged to return you my Thanks, and to make the Acknowledgment as publick as the Obligation. I am very certain, that nothing can contribute more to the Honour and Advantage of that Christian Liberty, or Religious Comprehension, which I have been pleading for, than your Way of writing against it; and I am therefore extremely sorry, that

after the Offence you had taken at the Funeral of a late Author, you ſhould chuſe to act over the ſame Tragedy upon your ſelf, by reſolving to depart, in ſpite of all the Perſuaſions and Intreaties of your Friends; and that *nothing*, not even the Cauſe and Intereſt of the *Church*, ſhall ever provoke you to *appear again*. But you muſt give me leave here to tell you, *Sir*, that 'tis not friendly, or benign to Mankind, thus voluntarily to deprive the World for the future, of your clear and ſtrong *Reaſonings*, your *maſterly Illuſtrations*, and *judicious Reflections*, which I am well aſſured would do a great deal of Good; eſpecially in ſuch a Time of common Danger, when all Hands ſhould be a-loft to ſave the *Church*, from the confounding Pretenſions, and exorbitant Claims of *Religion*.

However, if it muſt be ſo; if you and I are never to ſee each other's Face more; there is nothing, I think, to be done at preſent, but to underſtand one another, if poſſible, and endeavour to part as good Friends as we can. I muſt own, that I can perceive no Manner of Relation or Connexion between that Kennel of Dirt and Filth, which you have raked together out of Hiſtory and ſome late Pamphleteers, and the Controverſy between your Friend and me. Whether you are in the Right or in the Wrong, as to your perſonal and Party-Reflections, the Argument ſtands juſt as it was; and you have ſaid no more to it, than if you had been all this while only picking your Teeth, or paring your Nails. When I read your Book, and endeavour to find out any one Principle of Reaſon upon which you proceed, or any one Remark,

mark, or Hiſtorical Obſervation, that may not be turned with much greater Strength againſt you; I am utterly loſt, and can ſee nothing before me but Dirt and Darkneſs.

You tell me, in the firſt Place, with an Air of Hypochondriacal Pleaſure, that your Friend, the Author of the *Reflections*, notwithſtanding the Entertainment of a late publick Funeral, is ſtill alive, and in good Health; that his Buſineſs and Reputation grow upon him, in Conſequence of his learned Performance; which he gratefully acknowledges as owing, in ſome Meaſure, to me.

This, I preſume, is ſaid to let us ſee, that you cannot write a Page in publick, without making your ſelf a publick Jeſt. What I have maintained, and have ſtill reaſon to ſtand to, is this, That your Friend is departed out of the World of Authors, that his *Spirit* ſleeps, and that he has not one Drop of Blood left to be ſpent in the Controverſy. If it be otherwiſe, 'tis he alone who muſt diſprove it; ſince 'tis impoſſible that you, or any Body elſe, ſhould do it for him. But you, in your great Wiſdom, to diſcredit the Report of your Friend's Deceaſe and Interment, give us to underſtand, that he ſtill lives, and breathes, and *teaches School*; which is what I had never contradicted.

Your carrying the Jeſt ſo far, is turning it upon your ſelf; and your Miſtake argues a very great want of Logick; as if the ſame Perſon might not be dead and alive, in *different Reſpects*; or as if a living *Man* might not be a dead *Author*; and a dead Author a very good and uſeful *School-maſter*.

Your

Your Friend's Talents, I believe, are by this Time ſufficiently known; and, I hope, he will, for the future, obſerve that Proverbial Admonition, to which his beſt and moſt diſcerning Friends have adviſed him already, *Ne ſutor ultra crepidam.*

The moſt material Paſſage in your whole Book, and without which I ſhould ſcarce have troubled you or the Publick with any farther Reply, is what I find in *p.* 6, 7, where you charge me with *wickedly miſrepreſenting* your Friend, the Author of the *Reflections*; and as *not having the Fear of God before my Eyes*, imputing to him *a horrid Piece of Prophaneneſs*; making him aſſert, *as a Foundation of the Chriſtian Faith*, what *he only mentions as an Objection of the modern Free-Thinkers, whoſe Stile* he there *uſes.*

If I am as wicked and ungodly a Wretch, as you here repreſent me, 'tis certainly fit that I ſhould be treated accordingly, and be brought to publick Confeſſion, Shame, and Repentance. But if I have herein acted fairly, ſoberly, and in the Fear of God, 'tis fit likewiſe the World ſhould know it; and determine what they ought to think of a Man, who can bring ſuch a Charge, without the leaſt Ground, and contrary to the plaineſt Matter of Fact.

You dared not here truſt your Reader's Eyes with the Evidence on both Sides; and therefore you choſe rather barely to quote the Pages, and refer him to Paſſages in Books which he might not have by him, and which, as you muſt preſume, he would not give himſelf the Trouble to look into or examine.

The Objection, as put by the Author, *p.* 33. of the *Reflections*, and as quoted by me, *p.* 18. of the Anſwer, is this, *But the greateſt Difficul-*

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ty is ſtill behind; and that is the Myſteries of the Goſpel, certain unintelligible Doctrines, impoſed upon us as Articles of Faith, which no mortal Man can explain or comprehend; and yet we are told, that theſe are neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation, which *ſeems very abſurd and unreaſonable.* Now, how does he get rid of this Objection? Does he deny, that theſe *Chriſtian Doctrines* here referred to, are, in his own Scheme, unintelligible, incomprehenſible, and ſuch as no mortal Man can explain or conceive? Not at all; but he grants the whole Thing, and leaves the Objection in its full Weight; only he makes an inſignificant Diſtinction between Things *above,* and *contrary to Reaſon:* From whence he concludes, that theſe *Chriſtian Doctrines,* and *neceſſary Articles of Faith,* tho' they are unintelligible, incomprehenſible, and ſuch as no mortal Man can explain or conceive; yet they may be true for all that, and not contrary to Reaſon; they may be unintelligible, incomprehenſible, and inexplicable *Truths.* Well! perhaps it may be ſo; but then it would be a Contradiction in Terms, to pretend to any Thing of a Revelation in this Caſe, or to ſay that theſe unintelligible, incomprehenſible *Truths,* are *revealed* without being *made known* to us; and therefore theſe *Truths,* theſe *Chriſtian Doctrines,* and theſe *neceſſary Articles of Faith,* himſelf being Judge, can be of no Uſe or Service to us at all: For he tells us, *p.* 50. that, If the Scripture *be not intelligible, it cannot anſwer the Ends for which it was given; That no Man can be taught, reproved, corrected, or inſtructed by what he does not or cannot underſtand,*—and *that it is inconſiſtent, either with the Wiſdom or Goodneſs of God, to give us a Revelation, to be a Guide to Truth,*

and

and the Rule of Righteouſneſs, which is not eaſy to be underſtood by every Honeſt Enquirer. I preſs'd this Difficulty upon the Author before, to know how he would reconcile the unintelligible, inexplicable Myſteries of the *Athanaſian* Divinity, with the obvious Plainneſs and Clearneſs of Scripture, in all neceſſary Points of Chriſtian Faith and Practice. But this is I find *noli me tangere*, which you have not dared to meddle with yourſelf, and for which, perhaps, you will not eaſily forgive me.

I farther urge upon the Author, that his Diſtinction of Things *above Reaſon*, and *contrary to Reaſon*, could be of no Uſe to him here; not only becauſe unintelligible Doctrines can be no neceſſary Part of Religion, by the Author's own Acknowledgment, but eſpecially becauſe, as I have proved, 'tis impoſſible that the Aſſent of the Mind ſhould, in any Caſe whatever, go beyond the Perception of the Underſtanding; and conſequently, an unintelligible Propoſition can no more be the Object of *Faith*, than it is of *Knowledge* or *Perception*. To this you have given no Anſwer, tho' it plainly deſtroys the Author's whole Scheme, and leaves him intirely in the Power and at the Mercy of the *Deiſts* and *Free-Thinkers*.

And now I may ſafely leave it to the Reader's Judgment, whether I had wickedly charged the Author againſt his Principles, or whether you have not wrongfully charged me againſt the plain Truth of the Caſe in Fact. I will not ſay, that this was *wickedly* done of you, and that you had no *Fear of God* before your Eyes; ſince 'tis poſſible it might proceed from you under the Influence and Poſſeſſion of ſome

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ſtrong enlivening *Spirit*, which leaves a Man for the preſent not ſtrictly accountable for his Words or Actions; or it might be owing to a certain conſtitutional Elevation of the Blood, which ſometimes, after a great Depreſſion, is apt to riſe too high, and carry a Man above and beyond the Sight and Comprehenſion of himſelf, or any Thing about him. Thoſe I find who pretend to know your proper Name and real Character, are of this Opinion; but as that Matter is nothing at all to me, I ſhall let it paſs.

Having graced your Title Page with ſome grave Impertinences and ſolemn Fooleries, from an Author, whoſe Authority is juſt as good as your own, and charged me with Impudence, Preſumption, Wickedneſs, and every Thing, that either Weakneſs, or Malice, a cankered Heart, or a diſtempered Head could ſuggeſt; you come at length, *p.* 12. to tell me, that the Queſtion between you and me ſhall not be, who is in the right, but *whether Two and Three make Five?* The late Author's Queſtion was this, *Whether a Triangle muſt not have three Sides, as well as three Corners?* Which was to determine the Controverſy between the Church and Diſſenters; and you come up ſo near to him in the Clearneſs of ſtating Queſtions, that one might be apt to imagine you the ſame Man. But if Two and Three make Five, then it muſt plainly follow, that as the religious Right and Liberty of Mens acting according to their Judgments and Conſciences has been abuſed, ſo it may be abuſed again, and therefore no ſuch Liberty of private Judgment and Conſcience ought to be granted; but the Authority of the Church is to be ſubmitted

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to in all Matters of Religion and Conſcience, under the Penalty of Damnation. If this be not the plain Deſign of all your Rant and Scandal, and of all the ſilly Party-Stories you have raked together; I defy any Man living to put any conſiſtent Senſe, or Meaning, at all to it. And that this is your Meaning, I need no other Evidence, than the Addreſs of that Houſe of Commons which you quote and approve, *p.* 17. where they inſtigate their Prince againſt that Indulgence and Liberty of Conſcience, which his Majeſty was inclined to grant: A Piece of Advice certainly, which ought to ſtand upon Record, to the eternal Shame and Diſhonour of thoſe who gave it; and who thought, no doubt, the moſt ſavage unnatural Perſecution a better Way and to ſecure the Peace and Happineſs of the King's Subjects, than religious Indulgence and Liberty of Conſcience. But what if I had now Time and Patience to turn the Tables upon you, and to ſhew, from the moſt authentick hiſtorical Evidence, that ever ſince the Civil Eſtabliſhment of Chriſtian Churches, the ambitious domineering Part of the Clergy, thoſe who have been for making Creeds, Canons, and Conſtitutions, to bind the Conſciences of Men in Matters of Religion, have ever proved the common Plagues of Mankind, the Peſts and Incendiaries of human Society, and the true Authors and Fomenters of the moſt *general* and moſt *fatal* Miſeries and Calamities, that have ever befallen the Chriſtian World; Would you quit your Pretenſions to *Church-Authority* upon this Evidence, and lay aſide a Thing that ever has been, and is ever like to be ſo much abuſed? I ſuppoſe not; but

you would ~~ask~~ me, perhaps, *how I came by ſuch Stories?* whether I am not miſinformed? and whether theſe Incendiaries have not been ſome other Sort of People *in the Dreſs and Habit of Prieſts and Clergymen?* As to which I ſhould have nothing to anſwer, *Sir*, but only to deſire you to go to ſleep a little, and write again upon this Subject, when your Head is better compoſed: But at preſent you ſeem uncapable of judging about Things that are neareſt Home; and whether the Diſorders and Confuſions you complain of, in our Civil War, might be more owing to *Oliver Cromwell*, or to Archbiſhop *Laud*.

I had ſaid, that to allow the Sufficiency of Scripture, as the only Rule of Chriſtian Faith and Practice, and yet to plead for the Neceſſity of other Rules, ſuch as human Creeds, Canons, *&c.* was affronting the Underſtandings of Men, and a moſt ridiculous Banter upon Common Senſe.

Upon this you appear very much hurried and diſtracted; and you run up and down forward and backward, like a Man at his Wits End: Sometimes you cry out, *If all Parties ſhould be laid on a Level*; that is, if nothing ſhould be made neceſſary to Church-Communion, but what the Scripture has made neceſſary to Salvation, and if Men ſhould leave the Way into the Church as free and open as Chriſt has left the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven, this muſt introduce nothing but Diſorder and Confuſion: But then preſently you recall yourſelf, by allowing the Sufficiency of Scripture as the only Rule, and quote the *6th Article* of the Church for it.

This

This then you ſee is a moſt perplexing Caſe. If the Scripture *it ſelf*, the Bible *alone*, be a ſufficient, and the *only Rule*; 'tis evident, that all other Rules, of what Nature, Kind, or Denomination ſoever, muſt be unneceſſary. But if other Rules are neceſſary, and ſuch as cannot be ſpar'd, 'tis plain, that the Scripture, the Bible, is not a ſufficient, nor the only Rule of Chriſtian Faith and Practice. Now ſuch is your Diſtreſs here, that you are reduced to the Neceſſity of maintaining both Parts of the Contradiction: The Scripture, with you, is a ſufficient inſufficient Rule; and your human Articles, Canons, *&c.* are unneceſſary neceſſary Rules, or needleſs Things that cannot be ſpared.

You muſt maintain the Sufficiency and Perfection of the Scripture, as the *only Rule* of Chriſtian Faith and Practice, or otherwiſe you would give up the Proteſtant Cauſe, and fall a Sacrifice to the Church of *Rome*. On the other Hand, you are conſtrain'd, by the cleareſt and moſt neceſſary Conſequence, to deny and diſclaim the Sufficiency and Perfection of Scripture, as the *only Rule* of Chriſtian Faith and Practice, and maintain on the contrary, that there are certain human Articles Canons, *&c.* that are neceſſary in Point of Chriſtian Faith and Practice, and without which the Scripture alone would not be ſufficient. And unleſs you will ſay this, you muſt agree with the Proteſtant Diſſenters, that your Articles, Canons, *&c.* are needleſs at leaſt, if not hurtful. You are therefore crucify'd between theſe two, ſuſpended between *Heaven* and *Earth*; and I can ſee no Help for it, tho' you ſhould make wry Faces to the Right and to the Left, and call them both Thieves.

Your

Your quoting a Popiſh Writer againſt me, as if I could be aſhamed or frighted out of the Truth, becauſe a Papiſt had happened to ſpeak it before me, is weak and trifling beyond all Expreſſion. I muſt declare, that I have never ſeen the Pamphlet which you refer to, from *p.* 44 — 47. but by what you have tranſcribed from it, the Argument is very ſtrong againſt you, and ſuch as neither you, nor all the High-Churchmen in *England*, can ever anſwer.

Now, becauſe this ſeems to be the moſt proper Place for it, I ſhall here ſettle the Account with you, concerning the Authority of the Church, as *eſtabliſhed by Law*. I had maintain'd, that the Church, in this Capacity, could have no proper Authority at all diſtinct from the Civil Juriſdiction; becauſe all Authority whatſoever is, by the Laws, and the Church's Oaths, veſted in, and derived from, the King's Majeſty, and exerciſed by the Clergy, only as State-Penſioners under the Crown. Now here you have not been able to deny the Principle, as Matter of Fact. This could not be done, ſince 'tis as certain as that there is any ſuch Thing as a Church of *England* eſtabliſhed by Law. But you here very unluckily refer me to *Hobbs*'s *Leviathan*, as a Book which you preſume I muſt have by me; and you give me to underſtand, that if this be ſo, as I have obſerved, and which you have granted, it muſt follow, that the Church is a Leviathan, eſtabliſhed upon the Principles of *Hobbiſm*, which reſolve all Religion into the Will of the Civil Magiſtrate.

But would any Churchman, in his Wits, have drawn ſuch a Conſequence from a Princi-

ple which he had silenty granted, and could not deny? Did ever any Man but you thus betray his own Cause, and damn the Church, of which he is an unworthy Member?

I desire that this may be taken Notice of here, as your own Inference. No Adversary certainly need to bring any Charge against a Church, that is so happy as to have such a Defender. Nay, to make the Matter sure, you quote *Hobbes*'s own Words, *p.* 45. *We never shall have a lasting Peace, 'till the Ministers know they have no Authority but what the Supreme Civil Power gives them.* The *Ministers* then, it seems, know that they have an Authority which is not derived from the Supreme Civil Power, tho' they swear the contrary. A fine Compliment, surely, upon *these Ministers*, for which they will doubtless vote you their due Thanks; who, according to your Account of them, must be a Pack of mercenary graceless Wretches, that, to secure the Benefits of a Civil Establishment, take Oaths every Day, contrary to their Knowledge and Consciences. But this Perjury will never be at an End, 'till the Pretence of Independent Church-Authority is dropt, and 'till *these Ministers* know that they are Subjects, and not Rulers; the Servants, Delegates and Sub-Agents, and not the Lords and Masters of the *Church*, or *Christian People*.

From hence 'tis plain, that whatever *Church* you and your Brethren are of, it cannot be of the Church *established by Law*: Since that Church is so far from admitting any independent Authority in her Priesthood, that she obliges all her Clergy to disclaim it before God and Man, by renouncing it upon Oath, and placing all Authority,

Authority, Eccleſiaſtical as well as Civil, in the King's Majeſty.

I had urged it as wholly indefenſible in the Conſtitution of the Church, that Things confeſſedly indifferent and unneceſſary ſhould be ſuperadded by mere human Authority, and tack'd to the neceſſary Inſtitutions of Chriſt, in ſuch Manner as to exclude from the Communion of the Church, and from the Benefits of the Goſpel, thoſe, who by reaſon of natural Weakneſs, groundleſs Scruples, reaſonable Prejudices, or any other Cauſe whatever, ſhould not be able to comply with theſe pretended *indifferent Things*: And I ſhewed, that no Authority upon Earth could be ſufficient to conſtitute any mere poſitive Rights and Inſtitutions in *Matters of Religion*, and to exclude Men from the *Church of Chriſt*, in Caſe of Non-compliance. Now your Anſwer to this is wholly evaſive, and perfectly trifling, and a full Proof that you can take nothing in hand without ſpoiling it: For here you put yourſelf to the Expence of ſeveral Pages in Quotations from the learned Writers of the Church, to prove that they do not look upon theſe confeſſedly *indifferent* Things to be *neceſſary*: but that the Inſtitutions of Chriſt are compleat and perfect without them; as Baptiſm, for inſtance, without the Sign of the Croſs: And you might have added, without Sponſers or Sureties; and that unaccountable Method of Baptizing by Proxy, and of one Perſon's believing and repenting for another.

Now this, *Sir*, you may remember was the very Objection which I made; that theſe human Inſtitutions being profeſſedly indifferent

and needleſs, the tacking them to the Inſtitutions of Chriſt, and denying People what is *neceſſary*, unleſs they will comply with what you own to be unneceſſary, muſt therefore be the more unreaſonable and inexcuſable, and ſuch as muſt needs leave the Impoſers ſelf-condemned. But to this you have ſaid nothing; and that for a very good Reaſon, becauſe nothing could be ſaid. The Church caſts out her weakeſt Children, her Babes and Sucklings, and ſuch as have moſt need of her Compaſſion, and leaves them to periſh with Famine, unleſs they can find Proviſion elſewhere: And yet at the ſame Time, you cry out how tenderly you regard them, and how willing you are to receive them, while you will not part with the leaſt Trifle for the Salvation of their Souls.

The Government indeed has been more wiſe and merciful, and granted them a legal Toleration; which has kept them from periſhing, and for which as is evident they owe no Thanks at all to the Church. But the Author of the *Reflections* had neither Wit nor Mercy; he was reſolved that the Toleration ſhould be of no Service at all to the Diſſenters, and therefore he roundly declares them altogether to be a Pack of the moſt wicked and ungodly Schiſmaticks, whoſe Sin is as great as *Treaſon* or *Horſe-ſtealing*, and evident as that *a Triangle has three Sides as well as three Corners.* At the ſame Time he falls foul upon a Right Reverend Prelate of the Church, and charges him with advancing a moſt wicked and fatal Notion of Sincerity, which muſt needs lead Men into, and harden and encourage them in Sin. And all this for no other Reaſon in the World that I could ſee,

but

but because that Prelate, who now happens to be his Diocesan, had defended the *Church* upon Principles consistent with the Nature of Religion, the Authority of God and Conscience, and the Common Rights and Liberties of Mankind.

These, *Sir*, are the true Grounds upon which I ventured to attack the learned Author, and without which he had never heard from your humble Servant by Way of Opposition; but he might have gone on to reform the Deists and Free-Thinkers of the Age, in his own Way, without any Hindrance from me. But I hope he will not say, that the Bishop of *Sarum*, and all his Friends in the Church, with the Dissenters in general, are, in this odious Sense, Deists and Free-Thinkers. This, I hope, was Reason sufficient for my answering the Author of the *Reflections*. But what you pretend, that I wrote against him from mere *Spite* and personal Prejudice, is utterly false and groundless. I had resolved upon, and begun the Answer, before I had any the least Intimations about the Author: And therefore, it could not be owing to any personal Prejudice, unless you can suppose me to have been under any particular personal *Obligations* to him, which ought to have induced me to lay aside the Design, as soon as I came to know who was my Adversary; but I had no personal *Prejudice* nor *Obligation*, and therefore wrote as to that with the utmost Impartiality.

Now since you have dropt this main Cause, and left your Friend in the *Lurch*, and intirely destitute of *Help*, where he was most of all in Distress; I cannot think but he will be asha-

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med of your Defence. And I believe you could not upon this Occaſion diſſemble your own Confuſion, if you did not comfort yourſelf with the Imagination that your Face is covered, and that acting thus in Maſquerade no Body knows you.

I had blamed the Author, for charging the Luſts and Vices of the Deiſts upon their Principles: But you take me up for it, and ſay, *that, on the contrary*, he charged their Principles upon their Luſts and Vices. The Truth is, he has done both: Sometimes he repreſents the Principles as pregnant with all Wickedneſs; and at other Times he inverts that Order, and derives the wrong Principles from the wrong Practice; and indeed he could not be the Man he is, if he did not in every Thing contradict himſelf.

You endeavour to juſtify the Author's Account of the Spirit, by producing a long Quotation from *p.* 52 —— 58. out of Dr. *Cheyne's Philoſophical Principles of Natural Religion*, as you tell me; tho' in that Edition of the Book I have by me, there is not one Word of the Matter in the Places you refer to, nor any where elſe; but as 'tis poſſible there may be After-Editions of the ſame Book which I have not ſeen, I ſhall take the Quotation at preſent as Dr. *Cheyne's*.

I thought I had ſufficiently mortified you as to this trifling, in quoting *Authorities* inſtead of *Arguments*. But I ſee this petty retail peddling Trade, is all that your Stock will reach to; and you muſt do this, or ſit ſtill, and not be able to *turn the Penny*.

But

But this Quotation is to let me ſee, *that* Britannicus *was not ſingular in his Opinion*; and, I ſuppoſe, to convince me farther, that you are a very *ſingular Writer*. I had ſhewn your Friend's Diſcourſe of the Spirit to be abſurd, unintelligible, and contrary to Reaſon and Scripture; and this by Arguments, which 'tis plain you are not able to anſwer, ſince you have not dared to attempt it.

Now either Dr. *Cheyne* agrees with *Philelutherus Britannicus* herein, or not. If not, the Quotation is nothing to the Purpoſe: But if he does, the ſame Arguments which have been urged againſt the one, will hold good againſt the other, and which have never yet been anſwered.

What I had ſaid to ſettle and clear up the true Meaning of that Scripture-Diſtinction between *Body*, *Soul*, and *Spirit*, you take no Notice of; but call my ridiculing your Friend's Enthuſiaſm and Nonſenſe, *prophane Drollery*, and what diſcovers a *deplorable Ignorance of Scripture*. But however, let my Notion of that Matter ſtand, if you pleaſe, as if it was *Truth* and *Soberneſs*, and the right Senſe of Scripture, 'till you can find ſomething in anſwer to it.

And now, if I have omitted or over-looked any Thing material in the Argument, I am ſure it is not willingly; and if it ſhould happen ſo, I ſhall be ready to make Amends for it, upon any proper Occaſion, by doing the Author farther Juſtice.

As for you, *Sir*, ſince you have choſen to bury yourſelf alive, I hope you will not blame me for it: You declare, you will write no more upon any Provocation whatever. I think this

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is a very prudent Resolution: You have done enough; you have exercised your Talent, and 'tis high Time to take your Leave. There is nothing, I think, odd in the Matter but this, that you should die before you are born; and that so great a Man as Mr. *Nisbett*, the *Bristol-Letter-Writer*, should be lost before he was found.

Marlborough, May 13. 1734.

I am, SIR,

Your Humble Servant,

T. M.

FINIS.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM